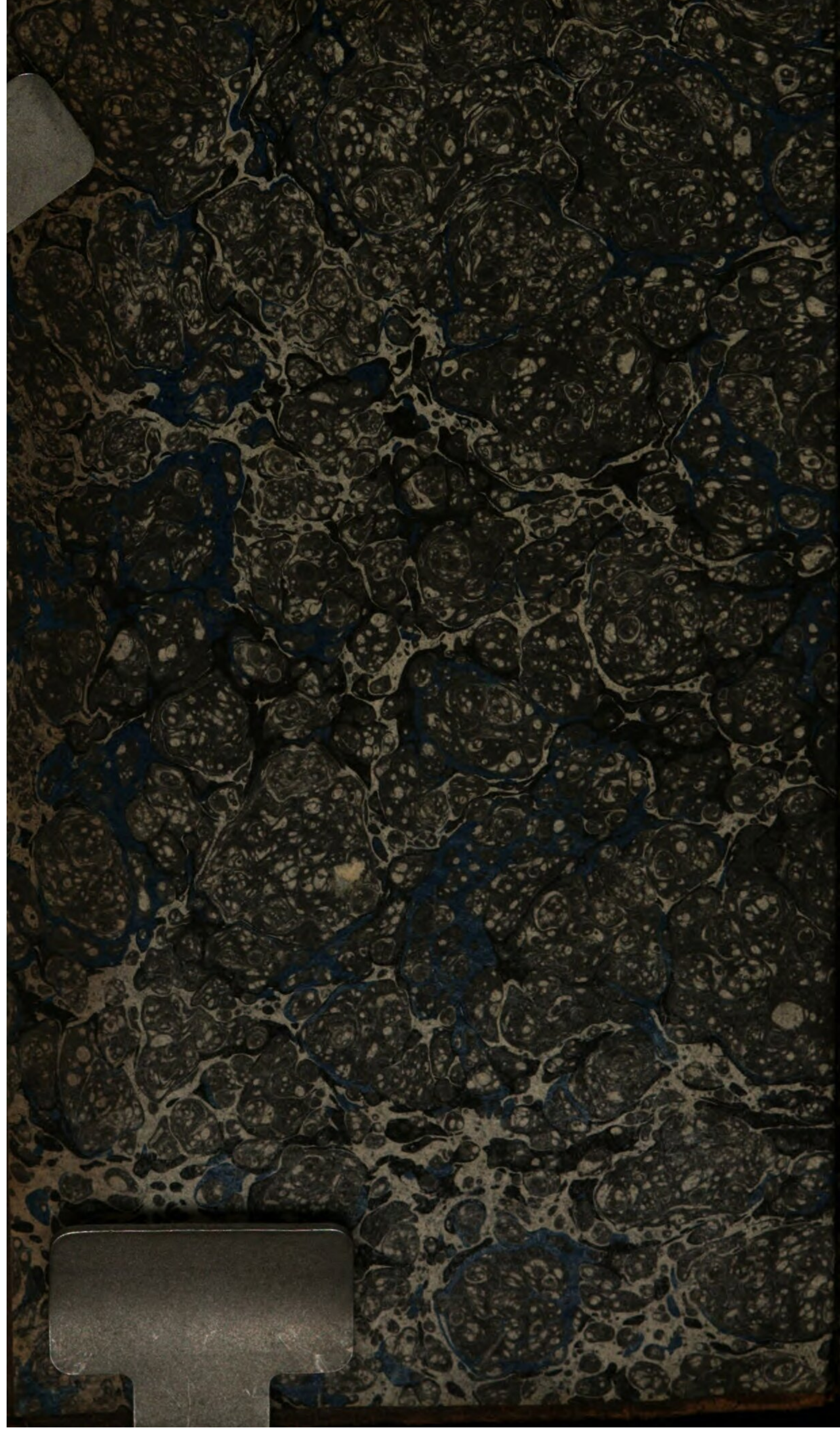
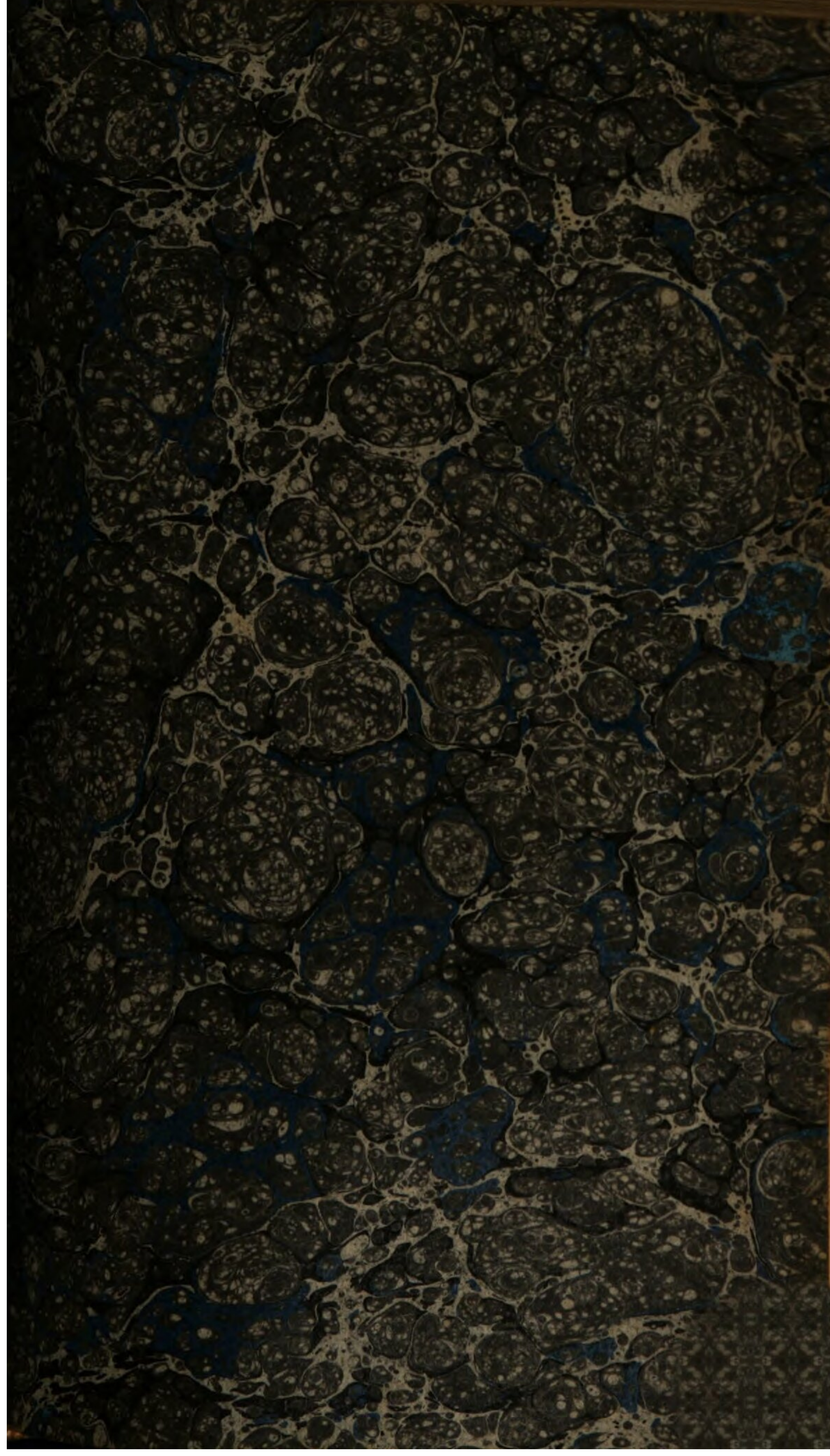








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THE
L I F E
OF
V O L T A I R E,

BY THE
MARQUIS DE CONDORCET.

JUSTE To which are added,
MEMOIRS OF VOLTAIRE,
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

V O L. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR G. G. J. AND J. ROBINSON, PATER-
NOSTER-RROW.

=====

M. DCC. XC.

BRITISH MUSEUM

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WE have here subjoined several
Letters, which will ^A better serve to
display **S E L E C T I O N**
those, and that of his

O F

JUSTIFICATORY PIECES;

FOR

THE LIFE OF

M. DE VOLTAIRE.

The

A
SELECTION
OF
JUSTIFICATORY PIECES
FOR
THE LIFE OF
M. DE VOLTAIRE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

WE have here subjoined several Letters, which will better serve to display the character of M. de Voltaire, and that of his enemies.

A tribute of admiration paid, by a prince of the blood, to a young man whose rank in life placed him at a distance from that personage, and whose fame had not then lessened the distance between them, has appeared to us to merit preservation.

The

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Note sent by the celebrated Le Kain cannot fail to interest men of letters ; in it, that great actor, ingenuously paints Voltaire's enthusiasm for the dramatic art, and for the talent of acting ; and, at the same time, the zeal with which he endeavoured, notwithstanding his love of the art, and his desire to find actors worthy of his pieces, to dissuade that young man from the pursuit of a profession too much degraded by prejudice, while he added to his advice the means of entering into some other situation.

ADVERTISEMENT.

situation. This anecdote is one of those which prove that benevolence was the ruling passion of Voltaire's soul.

Thus, with still greater disinterestedness, he prevailed on Mademoiselle Clairon, in 1765, to renounce the stage ; although the powers of this sublime actresses were in all their vigour, and became daily more necessary to the poet, whose dramatic genius began to decline by age and intense application.

His

ADVERTISEMENT.

His counfels to D'Alembert and Diderot, when they were perfecuted for publishing the Encyclopedia, and many circumstances of the same nature, will further prove that the love of justice rose, in his mind, superior to every other consideration.

A SE

A
S E L E C T I O N
O F
JUSTIFICATORY PIECES.

V E R S *

DE S. A. S. LE PRINCE DE CONTI,

A M. DE VOLTAIRE.

1718.

P L U T O N † ayant fait choix d'une jeune pucelle,
Et voulant donner à sa belle
Une marque de son amour,

Commanda qu'une fête et superbe et galante

Réparât

† Pluto having chosen a youthful virgin, being
desirous to afford the beauty a proof of his love,
gave commands that a magnificent and gallant fes-
tival should dissipate the horrors of his gloomy

* The intention of Justificatory Pieces is such as to re-
quire a more faithful and literal translation than perhaps can
be given in verse, which should preserve the true spirit of
poetry. For which reason the originals of the few poetical
pieces which are here contained, are inserted, and rendered
in prose in the notes.

VOL. II.

B

abode.

Réparât les horreurs de son triste séjour.

Pour satisfaire son attente,

Il fait assembler à sa cour

Tous ceux dont le bon goût et la délicatesse

Pouvaient contribuer au spectacle pompeux

Qu'il préparait à sa maîtresse.

Parmi tous ces hommes fameux,

Il choisit ceux dont le génie

S'était signalé dans tous lieux

Par la plus noble poésie.

Chacun à réussir travailla de son mieux.

Pour remporter le prix et Corneille et Racine

Unirent leur veine divine :

Chaque auteur en vain disputa,

Et

abode. For this purpose, he invited to his court all those whose good taste and delicacy could contribute to the pompous spectacle, which he was preparing for his mistress. From among these so famous men he selected all whose genius had been any where signalised in the sublime art of poetry. Each did his best to succeed. Corneille and Racine united their talents divine to bear away the prize ; each in vain contended, and wished to gain the suffrage of the

I.

God,

Et voulut gagner le suffrage
Du Dieu qui demandait l'ouvrage;
Bien que des deux esprits la pièce l'emportât,
L'on ignorait encor qu'elle eût eu l'avantage.
Enfin le jour venu de cet événement,
De tant d'auteurs la cohorte nombreuse
Recherchait la gloire flatteuse
De remporter l'honneur de l'applaudissement.
Tandis qu'à faire cette brigue,
Toute la troupe se fatigue,
Sans se donner du mouvement,
Racine avec Corneille, au sein de l'Elysée,
Rappelaient l'histoire passée

Du

God, who had issued his commands; for though victorious over all competitors no one yet knew which of them might claim precedence. The day at length arrived, when the whole assembly of wits hoped to obtain the high renown which public applause had to bestow. While all were thus busied in contention, Racine and Corneille sat tranquilly in the Elysian groves, recalling to mind the history of times past, when they were the living ornaments of

Du temps où de la France ils étaient l'ornement.
Ils avaient vu par ceux qui venaient de la Terre,
Du théâtre français le funeste abandon,
Que depuis leur décès le délicat parterre

Ne pouvait rien trouver de bon.

Ce malheur leur causait une tristesse extrême.

Ils connaissaient que dans Paris l'on aime
D'un spectacle nouveau les doux amusemens ;

Qu'abandonnés par Melpomène,
Les auteurs n'avaient plus ces nobles sentimens

Qui font la grâce de la scène.

Depuis leur séjour en ces lieux,

Ilse

France. From ghosts newly arrived they had heard of the fatal decay of poetry in France ; and that the auditors of Melpomene, difficult to please, had, since their decease, found nothing worthy of the stage. Their grief at this intelligence was extreme ; they knew how much their countrymen were delighted with the pleasures the theatre can bestow ; and that, forsaken by the muse, poets no longer possessed those noble flights which so much grace the scene. Since their descent to these abodes, they

Ils avaient fait la connaissance
D'un démon fans expérience,
Mais dont l'esprit vif, gracieux,
Surpassait déjà les plus vieux
Par ses talens et sa science.
Pour réparer les maux du théâtre obscurci,
Ce démon fut par eux choisi.
Ils lui font prendre forme humaine ;
Des règles de leur art à fond l'ayant instruit,
Sur les bords fameux de la Seine
Sous le nom d'Arouet cet esprit fut conduit.
Ayant puisé ses vers aux eaux de l'Aganipe,
Pour son premier projet il fait le choix d'Oedipe :
Et

they had become acquainted with a spirit, inexperienced, but whose active and graceful wit surpassed the most aged in genius and in science. To repair the wrongs of the suffering stage, they chose this spirit, prevailed on him to assume a human form, and, having instructed him perfectly in their art, sent him to the banks of the Seine, where he took the name of Arouet. Having drunken of the waters of Aganippe, the first subject he chose was Oedipus ;

Et quoique dès long-temps ce fujet fût connu,
 Par un style plus beau cette pièce changée,
 Fit croire des Enfers Racine revenu,
 Ou que Corneille avait la sienne corrigée.

and, old though the fable was, its new and youthful beauties were so numerous that it was imagined Racine had returned from the shades, or that Corneille had corrected the defects of his verse*.

* These lines do as much honour to the Prince of Conti as the approbation of Oedipus did to la Motte. The prince and la Motte mutually announced a worthy successor of Corneille and Racine; and never was prophecy more fully accomplished,

L E T T E R

FROM THE ABBÉ DESFONTAINES,

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

May 31, 1724.

I SHALL never forget, sir, the infinite obligations I owe to you. The goodness of your heart is superior even to your understanding; and you are the truest of friends. The zeal with which you have served me does me, indeed, more honour, than the malice and baseness of my enemies does me injustice, by the unworthy treatment which they have brought upon me.

It is necessary that I should not publicly appear for some time. *Fallax infamia terret.*

I have received a letter *de cachet* which exiles me to the distance of thirty leagues from Paris. I depart with pleasure in search of solitude; but I am much mortified that this retreat should be enjoined me. It is some degree of triumph for the wretched authors of my disgrace. I am exceedingly willing to go into the country; but endeavour, fir, to procure the king's order to be superceded by another letter *de cachet*, in this form:

The

The King, informed of the falshood of the accusation brought against the Sieur Abbé Desfontaines, consents that he should remain at Paris.

Should you obtain this order from M. de Maurepas, it would be an essential point ; and I promise M. de Maurepas, on *my honour*, to depart immediately, and not to return to Paris, till I shall have demanded secret permission of him.

This, my dear friend, is what, at present, I have to beg you to obtain for me. You will confer yet another
infinite

infinite obligation on me, by this new service. It is, in my mind, the simplest means that can be taken to repair the scandal and injustice which I have endured, till I can do better, and can procure the necessary information to discover the hidden springs of the horrible intrigue of my enemies. Notwithstanding the atrocious nature of the accusation, and the readiness of the public to believe the accused guilty, I have the satisfaction of seeing those who are even unknown to me take my part. Such men as Nadal, Danchet, de Pons, and Fréret, are the only persons, I am told, who treat my name as, through
my

my life, I shall treat their infamous works and their unworthy characters.

Genus irritabile vatum.

I have formed a plan for my defence, which will be excellent and curious, and I shall finish it in the country. I am too publicly known to remain silent after such an execrable insult, and I shall compose my apology in such a manner that I shall have the honour of presenting it to M. de Maurepas, and shall beseech him to permit its publication. In this, will be seen all the misfortunes which have befallen me, and these misfortunes ever caused by men of letters;

ters; but it will particularly contain the history of my quitting the Jesuits.

Adieu, my dear friend; let me beg you to think of me.

DESFONTAINES.

LET-

L E T T E R

FROM THE SIEUR DEMOULIN

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Paris, August 12. 1738.

SIR,

WE thank you most humbly for all your goodnefs, and for the indulgence you have granted to enable us to repay you. We fhall ever preferve a faithful remembrance of it, and, on every occasion, fhall exprefs our lively gratitude. Your fecurity is perfectly good ; and we beg you to be perfuaded we fhall difcharge the debt as speedily as we poffibly can. I am in advance for
feveral

several good speculations, and our zeal to serve others has added to our embarrassment.

You do me justice, sir, in believing me incapable of any ill design; I venture even to declare to you that I never have entertained any, and that never had a lover a more tender attachment to his mistress than I to you, notwithstanding all that has happened. I have inconsiderate moments, it is true; you have often reproved me for them, with reason; but I will yield to no one in integrity of mind, purity of intentions, or zealous activity, when
there

there arises an opportunity of doing good.

I know that I have been greatly calumniated, and I know also that those who exclaimed most against me, quitted you to come to me with a design of exasperating my mind against you. Since that time, I have rendered some considerable services to one of those persons; and should occasions present themselves of obliging the others, I shall willingly embrace them. It is the only vengeance which I profess to take.

If you think I can be useful to you in any way, and indeed in affairs that may
require

require discretion, honour me with your commands; and I beseech you to be assured of an active and secret service.

My wife begs her most humble respects. I have the honour to be, with profound esteem,

SIR,

Your most humble servant,

DEMOULIN.

Acknowledgment of the same.

I, the undersigned, acknowledge that M. de Voltaire, having lent my wife and me the sum of twenty-seven thousands livres, and in consequence of the deranged situation of our affairs,
having

having consented to take the sum of three thousand livres secured by an obligatory writing, executed in the presence of the notary Ballot, on the 12th June, 1736, has now forgiven seven hundred and fifty livres which remained to be paid of the three thousand, and has given me an entire and full release for the same. Jan. 19, 1743.

DEMOULIN.

VOL. II.

C

LET-

L E T T E R S

FROM THE BOOKSELLER JORE

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

LETTER I.

Paris, December 20, 1738.

SIR,

I Entreat you, in consideration of the embarrassed state of my affairs and the detention of my papers, to pardon my delaying till now to acknowledge the wicked proceedings of those who have availed themselves of my misfortunes to oblige me to commence an unjust suit against you, and to suffer an infamous *factum* (declaration) to be printed. I altogether

gether retract them both. The malice of your enemies has served to no other purpose than to display the goodness of your character to me ; for you have the generosity to pardon the fault I have committed in listening to bad counsel. I assure you I repented even in the moment in which I was so unhappy as to act against you. I, at length, perfectly perceive how I was led into the error. The jealousy of men of letters is not unknown to you, and, in this, you see to what excess it has been carried. They have inflamed my mind, and have made me the means of injuring you ; which has so displeased me that I promise you never again to see those who induced

me to forget my duty to you in this instance, and I will atone for the extreme injustice of it, by the constant attachment which I vow to preserve through life to your interests.

I beseech you, sir, to restore your friendship to me, and to believe that my heart never took any part in the malice of your enemies, and that it is my heart alone which leads me to make this declaration.

I have the honour to be, with respect,

SIR,

Your most humble servant,

JORE.

L E T T E R II.

Paris, Dec. 38, 1738.

S I R,

I H A D the honour of writing to you, on the 20th of this month, in the bitterness of my heart, to entreat your forgiveness, and to assure you of the sincere repentance under which I suffer for the unjust suit which I was induced by your enemy (you know to whom I allude) to commence against you. I told you of my remorse and the horror which I felt at my cruel attack of him who was my benefactor; I informed you that I had dis-

covered the error into which I had been led; and I begged you, sir, to believe that my affliction is equal to my fault. Deign, sir, to extend your generosity to the granting me the pardon I venture to demand. I retract the unjust and calumnious *factum* which was made in my name, and which I had the unhappiness to sign. I was blind, and your enemies seduced me. Again, I repeat to you that I am in the deepest affliction, and my remorse has brought sickness upon me. There is nothing I would not do, during the remainder of my life, to atone for my fault. In short, sir, were you a witness of the distress I feel at being deceived by ill counsel, you would pity
my

my condition. Be so good, at least, to give orders that I may be informed that you have the clemency to pardon me, if you do not deign to write to me yourself. I engage to pay all the expence of the process if I have money sufficient ; nor is there any thing I should not be willing to do through the remaining days of my life to testify to you individually and to the public my repentance, my admiration of your character, and the very profound respect with which I am,

SIR,

Your most humble servant,

JORE.

LETTER III.

Paris, June 3, 1742.

I Have received, fir, the three hundred livres that you have after all had the goodness to give me. This new manner of avenging yourself of an unfortunate man, whose greatest unhappiness has been to forget what was due to you, and who has so long been grieved for his error, shall ever be present with my heart. Your generous actions to me augment my sincere repentance; and inspire me with the tenderest respect and affection for you. Those who

I

deceived

deceived me must indeed have been monsters; nor could they know your real character as I do. My life ought to be employed in proving my devotion to you. I cannot find terms to express the feelings you have excited in my heart. Permit me only to present myself before you, permit me to come and thank you; it is a favour I beseech you to add to all your other goodness.

I am, with respect and the most lively gratitude,

SIR,

Your most humble servant,

JORE.

LETTER IV.

Milan, October 20, 1768.

SIR,

THE pension you have the goodness to allow me, and some scholars whom I assisted in perfecting themselves in the French language, but who, unfortunately for me, are quitting this city to travel, have enabled me to subsist at Milan. Great God ! in what a situation shall I be placed, deprived of these succours ! I have been formerly useful to you in being your amanuensis ; can I no longer be of any service to you ?

If

If Milan were a place in which works were published in French, I could employ myself in correcting the prefs, and thus avoid the wretchedness which threatens me, and from which you, sir, can relieve me, by giving me an asylum in your house, where I am persuaded you must have some-one who is less useful to you than I might be,

I hope, sir, that when you consider my present condition, and how different it is from that in which you have formerly seen me, you will be induced to soften its severity; and so much the more readily as this change in my circumstances

cumstances has not arisen either from my own dissipation or imprudence.

When M. de Cideville procured me the honour of being known to you, he, as well as myself, regarded that honour as the means of augmenting my fortune; how could he foresee the injustice that would be done me, and that my total ruin would be the result?

I flatter myself that, moved by my unhappy situation, you will honour me with an answer which will dissipate the frightful apprehensions which I have of the future, and which I cannot shun
without

without your kind assistance. With
this hope, permit me to subscribe my-
self, respectfully,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

JORE.

LET

LETTER V.

Milan, April 23, 1769.

SIR,

ON my return from the Isles of Bormio, where his excellency Count Frederic was so good as to keep me three weeks for the benefit of the air, and to reinstate my health after the sickness I have had, Messieurs Origoni and Paraviccini remitted me from Florence, by your order, five and twenty sequins, for which I have given them a receipt in the name of Messieurs Francis and Louis Bontemps of Geneva.

I cannot

I cannot sufficiently testify my gratitude to you, nor could you, sir, have sent me this assistance more opportunely; as I wanted both linen and cloaths. Although your generosity extended the order to remit me what I should have occasion for without limiting the sum, I thought it my duty not to abuse your kindness; and without delay I employed the twenty-five sequins in the purchase of some cloaths which fortunately fitted me, and in four shirts which I have ordered to be made; and these will at least place me in a condition to appear decently in the houses of such people of rank as have the goodness to admit me.

In these families I have spoken of your goodness, and I was commended for having requested no more than this sum, although your liberality had not restricted me.

With what tranquillity shall I pass the remainder of my life, should I have the misfortune to survive you, were you to settle on me the means of supporting the distressing situation of my affairs, a situation which I have so little merited. I venture, sir, to hope this from your goodness. I shall then have nothing further to desire than an opportunity of expressing the greatness of my gratitude to you. I look for that
happy

happy day with impatience ; and beg
you to be persuaded of the respectful
attachment with which I have the ho-
nour to be,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

JORE.

LET. II. VOL. II.

LETTER VI.

Milan, September 25, 1773

SIR,

STRONGLY penetrated with gratitude and transported with joy, I thank you for your consoling promise of extricating me from my distress, and for the eight Louis d'ors which you sent me. They could not have arrived more fortunately to relieve me from the greatest embarrassment. Fearing I should offend you, I forbear to say all that passes in my mind. I flatter myself that your ideas of me are changed to my advantage, and I assure you that I deserve
they

they should be so by the sentiments of
gratitude with which I have the ho-
nour, respectfully, to be,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

JORE.

D² L E T-

L E T T E R

FROM M. DE SAINT-HYACINTH,

TO M. DE BURIGNY.

Belleville, May 2, 1739.

I RETURN you, fir, the manuscript which you did me the honour to confide to me. You will probably imagine that I have read it with pleasure, and you are not mistaken ; but should you conclude that I felt myself fatisfied when I had finished, you will be deceived. Charmed with what I have already seen, I have but the more sensibly felt the absence of the remainder ; and to the pleasure of perusing the
work

work has succeeded considerable anger against the author.

Your indifference, sir, or to speak more frankly, your indolence, must make all those who know of what you are capable as angry as myself. If you are so indifferent to fame as to condemn the reputation which must result from the perfection of this work, the justice the public have done you with respect to what you have already imparted to them calls on you to give them the remainder which they expect with impatience. No one has ascended with more truth, or more penetration to the fountain head, nor has any one treated this sub-

D 3

ject

ject with greater delicacy and precision. I shall excite all your friends to importune you till you have made the work complete. At the head of these I shall place the Countess, to whose lips the Graces have imparted the gift of persuasion; after which it will be seen whether we shall leave you indolent, and at your ease, for some time to come.

You did me justice, sir, when you asserted that I had no connection with the author of the *Voltairemanie*, whoever he may be; and I further now declare to you that I have never read the piece entirely through. I merely
glanced

glanced over it, because I was informed that the author had cited me relative to M. de Voltaire; a circumstance which I could not hear without indignation. I would gladly know by what authority M. de Voltaire's name and mine are brought in question, since neither the one nor the other are to be found in the work of mine which is quoted by them. They go further: would you suppose it, sir? They have interpreted what I meant to say. The deification, of which they speak, is merely a work of imagination, a chain of fictions, the links of which are connected to form a whole. The design in this was to point out in general the defects into which the learned fall, in

various sciences and various nations. The author has, therefore, in this work, been obliged to imagine circumstances, which, although related as characteristically personal, should be regarded merely as general satire, applicable to all the learned who may be guilty of similar errors. It is not possible to write an allegory, or draw a character, which the imagination of the reader cannot apply to some one; whom perhaps the author has not even known. Thus, he who, in a work of invention, shall have had only a general object, shall be made to allude to an individual, by the malignity of false interpretation. If this be permitted, we must

must no longer think of writing; at least till the public, becoming more reserved, judge of the intention of the author in conformity with the general design of his work; and till they forbear to cause the malignity of interpretation to recoil upon the writer whom they interpret.

When I saw in what manner the writer of the *Voltairomanie* had decided on my intention, I own to you, sir, that I was extremely surpris'd how he, who is said to be the author of it, can be thus totally unmindful of all decorum. My surpris'e equalled my indignation and his temerity, not to use a harsher term.

term. It is true that from the nature of the work there is nothing which we might not be led to expect.

I am informed that M. de Voltaire so much despised this book as not to answer it. He did perfectly right. Abortion is the destiny of such writings; which can only exist by being the subject of conversation. M. de Voltaire has more valuable employment. Cultivating at present the *Musas severiores*, they have taught him to rise into those tranquil regions to which the vapours of the earth do not extend: *Sapientum templa serena.*

Here,

Here, sir, are the two madrigals of M. de Bignicourt, which I could not perfectly repeat to you the last time I had the honour of seeing you in Paris.

Des traits d'une injuste colère

Vous payes mes feux en ce jour :

Iris, pourquoi voulez-vous faire

La Haine fille de l'Amour ?*

AUTRE.

Iris, vous dédaignez les feux

Qu'en moi vos charmes ont fait naître :

Mon destin n'est pas d'être heureux,

Mais mon cœur méritait de l'être†.

* With marks of unjust anger you now repay my passion. Wherefore, Iris, would you make Hatred the child of Love ?

ANOTHER.

† Iris, you disdain the flame which your charms have kindled in my bosom : it is not my fate to be happy, yet my heart deserves so to be.

Pray

Pray inform me, sir, whether you are acquainted with the manuscript on Tournaments, purchased by M. de Reieux; and, when time and circumstances shall suit, do not forget that you have at Belleville a very humble and very obedient servant,

SAINT. HYACINTH.

LET.

LETTER

FROM M. D'ARGENSON, THE ELDER,

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Paris, Feb. 7, 1739.

THIS Abbé Desfontaines is a vile man, sir; his ingratitude certainly surpasses the crimes by which he gave you an opportunity of obliging him. Fear not but that the people in power will be your partizans. I one day happened at the table of the cardinal to affirm that he was the rector of a good living in Normandy by which I offended all present. His eminence made
me

me repeat three times what I had said, and I should have lost the esteem of the world, and have ruined my fortune, had not the *Prévôt des Marchands* bore witness to the fact. The chancellor thinks as I do relative to this *** of the police ; and M. Herault ought to be of the same opinion, or he will render himself accountable to those whom he may condemn. The chancellor thinks well of your works, which he has often mentioned to me during our walks at Fresne. But of all your knights my brother is most angry with your enemy. I went to him after the receipt of your letter, and he told me that, in conformity to the chancellor's orders,

orders, the Abbé Desfontaines would be summoned to declare whether the libels in question were written by him; and, if not freely, would be obliged to sign the affirmative or the negative. Be assured the business will be properly conducted. I will shortly solicit the chancellor in person.

I embrace your cause with ardour and satisfaction, which is but just. I have continually known you the enemy of scandal; you are angry with knaves, and laugh at fools. I mean to imitate your example to the best of my ability; and yet I think myself an honest man. This is no more than having an opi-
nion;

nion; to impart such an opinion to our friends is detraction, which religion, good sense, and even instinct, forbid. You have always appeared to me far from having any such evil propensity, and I am confirmed in this supposition by your acknowledged works, which are worthy of yourself. Continue to write without fear for five and twenty years longer; but write poetry, notwithstanding your oath in the preface to Newton. With whatever clearness, beauty, and dignity, you may have understood and explained the philosophic system of this Englishman, do not therefore despise poetical epistles, poems, and tragedies. We shall always

ways obtain scientific food, but we shall soon have a dearth of works of wit, and no longer will go to the theatre from the want of good authors in verse and prose.

Adieu, sir: why do you mention protection and respect to an old friend, and one who will ever remain such?

VOL. II. E L E T.

LETTER

FROM THE SIEUR DE BONNEVAL*

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Paris, Feb. 27, 1737.

I Was at your house this morning, sir, with a design of having the honour of seeing you, and was informed that you were at court. You would, without doubt, have been surpris'd at my visit, but the motive by which it was occasioned would have surpris'd you still more. Nevertheless, I assumed cour-

* This Bonneval is a knave who formerly robbed me of ten louis d'ors, was dismissed from the house of Mantmortel, and wrote a libel against me. [*Note of M. de Voltaire written on the original letter.*]

age from the reflections which naturally arise in a mind of the first order, and I said to myself: It is true that, since the year 1725, I have scarce ever had the honour of seeing M. de Voltaire, but he will recollect that he walks in a sphere which does not permit every one to approach him; and he cannot be ignorant of the admiration of him which I have ever avowed, nor can he doubt the avowal without doing injustice to my discernment. No one at present has it more in his power to render him justice than myself, from the opportunity which I had during a year of observing him in those societies in which the mind and the heart may discover

but

E 2

their

their true feelings without danger; and thence I have formed an opinion of him which persuades me that it is a pleasure to him to confer obligations.

These sentiments, sir, led me to your house to beg the favour of you to lend me ten pistoles, for which I have an immediate occasion; and to offer you, for payment, an authority to receive the sum from the arrears of a rent which was left me by a lady of your acquaintance and who has been dead some years past. If the dead had any influence I would implore her mediation in my behalf. You would not have resisted that while she was living,
and

and perhaps she still lives in your memory; at least she merits the honour by the sentiments she entertained respecting you. I was acquainted with them to the hour of her death; and of that I was a sorrowful witness.

The request which I designed to have made personally to you I now communicate in writing, and if you should please to comply with it I will wait on any person you may think proper to name on your behalf, and place the authority in his hands. I fear to offend your delicacy should I here employ tricks of eloquence to dispose you to do me this favour. To explain our

necessity to a person who thinks nobly is to say every thing ; and I will only add that my gratitude shall be equally ardent and durable.

I have the honour to be most truly,
sir, your very humble servant,

DE BONNEVAL.

Rue St. Anne, at the house of M. Dionis,

LET-

LETTER

FROM M. PRAULT, JUNIOR, BOOKSELLER AT PARIS,

TO MADAME DE CHAMPEONIN, AT VASSY.

Paris, Jan. 24, 1739.

MADAM,

YOU know that I am indebted, for the obligation of being introduced to M. de Voltaire, to a magistrate who is his friend, and who is distinguished by his virtue and his merit. I had long wished to bring my business into repute by the works of a man whom I then knew only by the powers of his mind, and who has since so strongly attached me to him by the qualities of

his heart. My youth, my good disposition, and my sincerity, titles to his favour which are ever successful, completed what recommendation had commenced. Since that time, his confidence has rendered me the instrument of so many acts of generosity, that, as well in justice to him as in gratitude to friends whom I particularly regret, I think it my duty to render an authentic testimony of all my transactions relative to M. de Voltaire, and to answer the unjust accusation of the libel entitled *The Voltairomanie*, which all worthy people behold with indignation.

The

The following is the history of M. de Voltaire's works since I knew him, and which I am enabled to prove by authentic documents.

I began by printing the *Henriade* with considerable corrections, the profits of which M. de Voltaire presented to a young man whose talents had made him his friend; and to whom he also gave his tragedy of the *Death of Cæsar*. At the same time he gave the liberty of reprinting *Zaïre* to another bookfeller, whose copy-right in that work had expired. He gave to me his tragedies of *Oedipus*, *Mariamne*, and *Brutus*, for my own emolument. I also
published

published the Prodigal Son; the person who was charged to treat with me for it demanded so reasonable a price, that, far from having any disagreement, I gave him a hundred francs more than the price he had demanded. Some days after M. de Voltaire informed me in a letter that he never required money for his productions*, but books only. In fine, he made a present of his Elements of Newton to his Dutch book-fellers. Shortly after an edition was printed which was called the London edition, and I know that the book-feller, who began it unknown to Voltaire, thought, nevertheless, that it was

* That is to say, for himself.

an attention due to M. de Voltaire to communicate the design to him and to submit it to his corrections before it was published. The edition being ready to appear, M. de Voltaire bought a hundred and fifty copies to present to his friends at Paris, which cost him, including the binding, nearly a hundred pistoles.

This, madam, is the account of the profit which M. de Voltaire has drawn from his works; or rather it is the means of confounding his calumniator; and you will perceive what credit ought to be given to the impostures of which his work is an entire tissue.

I have

I have the honour to be, with the most profound respect, &c.

PRAULT, Junior.

*Declaration of the Abbé Guyot Desfontaines
to the Police.*

I declare that I am not the author of a libel printed under the title of *The Voltairomanie*; and that I altogether disavow it, regarding as calumnious all the facts which are imputed to M. de Voltaire in that libel; and that I should think myself dishonoured had I taken the least part in that production, possessing as I do all the sentiments of esteem for M. de Voltaire which are due
to

to his talents, and which the public so
justly exprefs for him. Done at Paris,
April 4, 1739.

DESFONTAINES.

*N. B. The original is deposited in the
hands of M. Hérault.*

T. E. L.
him

L E T T E R

FROM M. DE CHAMPBONIN

TO HIS SON,

AT THE FORTIFICATION OFFICE AT PARIS.

Chambonin May 15. 1739.

YOU must no longer write to M. de Voltaire at Cirey, my son; he is lately gone to Brussels with the Marquis and Marchioness du Chatelet. You will easily conceive how much we are afflicted at his absence; never was there a more tender or more respectable friend. We feelingly regret the four years which he passed in Champaign. Those happy days, during which we lived with him,

him, cannot but recal to your memory the numerous marks of friendship he bestowed on us ; which were so effectual that, had I the power, I could not do more even for you who are my son. How great then ought your gratitude toward him to be? He was under no obligation of affording you such singular marks of attachment, and I hope you will never forget the excess of his kindness. It is not enough that you should partake of the favours he has done us ; it is necessary that you should even surpass us in gratitude. Love him like your father ; every feeling of affection is due from you to him ; and

will give me still greater satisfaction than the same affection felt for me.

The regret of your mother equals mine ; you know our friendship for him, and we both lament the loss of those proofs of congenial tenderness, which he was so ready to return.

The Count and Countess de la Neuville, concerning whom you make enquiry, like us infinitely regret the loss of M. de Voltaire. He departed beloved by the whole country, and we all bewail his absence. The Marquis and Marchioness du Chatelet give us to hope that they will return to Cirey as soon

soon as they shall have completed their business.

Write regularly to Brussels, my son; and depend on the affection of myself and of your mother.

CHAMPBONIN.

VOL. II. F L E T

L E T T E R

FROM THE ABBÉ PREVÔST,

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

January 15, 1740.

I AM extremely desirous, sir, of becoming some way useful to you ; this is an old sentiment which I have often expressed in my publications, which I have communicated to M. Thiriot on more than one occasion, and which I feel very forcibly renewed since the affair of Prault. I cannot endure that a multitude of insignificant people, embittering their minds against such a character,

character, should, some of them from pure malignity, others from a false air of probity and justice, exert themselves to communicate the poison of their heart to more worthy people.

It has occurred to me that the public taste, which has been hitherto sufficiently uniform in its partiality to my writings, would render me more likely than any other man to do you some service. My admiration of your talents, and the particular attachment I profess to your person, would alone urge me to this objects with much zeal : but my own interest is connected with my wishes, and if I may in some measure

add to your reputation you may at the same time be serviceable to my fortune.

Here follow two points, fir, which demand a little explanation; but it shall be short; for I have only to lay the proposition before you.

1st. I have thought that *A defence of M. de Voltaire and his works*, written with care, energy, and simplicity, &c. might be a valuable work, and might perhaps once for all silence malignity. I should divide it into two parts; one of which would respect his person, and the other his productions. Those advantages

vantages which the habit of writing may have added to such abilities as I possess I will employ. The work should be published before the end of winter.

2d. The derangement of my affairs is such that if Heaven, or some one inspired by Heaven, does not enable me to settle them I shall soon depart for England. I should not complain of my situation, had it originated in my ill conduct; but, though I have been five years in France, with as many friends as there are worthy people in Paris, and with the protection of a prince of the blood* who entertains me in his own

* The Prince de Conti.

house, I am yet without a benefice of five fous. I owe about a hundred and fifty Louis d'ors ; for which my creditors, uniting together, have made me give my personal security ; and so urgent is my necessity that, having agreed to discharge my debts at a time which expires on the first of the ensuing month, I am threatened with an arrest if I am not punctual. Of a thousand opulent persons with whom I pass my life, I know not one of whom I can venture to demand this sum, or who I think would advance it for me.

The question is, would M. de Voltaire, partly engaged by his generosity and by his zeal for men of letters, partly
by

by my design to employ myself in his service, be willing to deliver me from the most cruel embarrassment which I have ever experienced. The undertaking is worthy of him; beside that the novelty alone of settling the affairs of a man to whom the protection of a prince of the blood, and I may add the friendship of all Paris, is ineffectual, appears to me a singular inducement.

I have two ways of repaying the obligation. The first, by a grateful sense of the favour; and I shall be reduced to that if death surprises me, for I do not possess a revenue of a single *sol**; but I

* One Penny.

am not advanced in years, and I enjoy a state of health which promises me long life. The other mode is, to give security on my books; that would be sufficient for my creditors if they would listen to reason, but my upholsterers and Taylors, who have waited some time for their debts, did not think the security sufficient. A man of letters will better understand the value of this fund.

I conclude, sir; for indeed here is a very extraordinary letter. I flatter myself that, as I shall find much pleasure in boasting of your kindness should you grant me the favour, you will also be
careful

careful to bury my request in oblivion if any reason, which I shall feel no wish to discover, should prevent you giving it the reception which I hope. But in either case, you will please to regard as one of your most devoted servants and zealous admirers the

Abbé PREVÔST.

P. S. You will readily imagine that the two proposals I have made you sprang from M. Prault's recital of your various beneficent actions.

REPORT

REPORT,

*Made to the Academy of Sciences by Messrs.
Pitot and Clairaut, April 26, 1741, relative
to the memorial of M. de Voltaire, concerning
Living Force.*

WE have examined, by order of the academy, the memorial of M. de Voltaire, entitled, *Doubts on the measure and the nature of moving Forces*. The memorial contains two parts. The first part is an abridged recital of the principal reasons which have been adduced, to prove that the forces of bodies in motion are as the quantities of motion, that is, as the mass multiplied by the simple velocity, and not by the square

2

of

of the velocity; as those pretend who adopt the theory of *Vis viva*, or *living force*. The reasons stated by M. de Voltaire are not given as demonstrations, but proposed as doubts: they, however, are the doubts of a well informed man, and greatly resemble decision.

We shall not enter into the examination of this first part, because the intention of the author seems only to have been to recite the strongest reasons which have been given against *living forces*, in a manner sufficiently brief and clear, so as to be recollected by the reader with facility.

In

In the second part, M. de Voltaire considers the nature of force. As he has concluded that *moving force* is only the produce of the mass multiplied by the velocity, he admits of no distinction between the *vis mortua*, or *dead force*, and the *vis viva*, or *living force*. When it is said that the force of a body in motion differs infinitely from that of a body at rest, this, according to him, is equal to saying that liquid is infinitely more liquid when it runs than when it does not.

He next states that, if force be nothing more than the produce of the mass multiplied by the velocity, it is
nothing

nothing more than the body itself acting, or ready to act. Thus he rejects the opinion of the philosophers, who have imagined that force was a distinct being, a substance animating and separate from bodies; that force ought to be sought for in the simple beings called monades, &c.

M. de Voltaire having remarked, as many other persons have previously done, that in various cases the quantity of motion augments, and remaining convinced that force is merely the quantity of motion, he asks whether those philosophers who have maintained the system of the preservation of an
equal

equal quantity of force, in nature, are not as far from the truth as those who should maintain the preservation of an equal quantity of species, individuals, forms, &c.

He next asks, by referring to the circumstance, that an elastic body striking on another more large, does then communicate a greater quantity of motion, and consequently according to him more force than it previously possessed, whether it be not evidently deducible that bodies do not communicate force; so that, the mass and the motion being insufficient for the communication of motion, the *vis inertia* would

would be likewise necessary, without which matter would make no resistance, and there would be no action.

M. de Voltaire further supposes, that the *vis inertia*, the mass, and the motion, are not sufficient. He thinks there must be a principle which keeps all bodies in motion, and incessantly communicates to them an acting force, or a force ready to act; which principle, according to him, should be gravity; whether gravity have or have not a mechanical cause.

Neither can gravity, continues he, account for all the effects of nature.

It

It is very far from explaining the force of organized bodies, which must have an internal principle, like that of elasticity.

M. de Voltaire concludes his memorial by saying, that since the active force of elasticity produces the same effects as force of any other kind, it may be concluded that nature, which often attains different ends by the same means, may also attain one end by various means; and that therefore true philosophy consists in recording the operations of nature, previous to subjecting the whole to any general law.

Of the various questions, difficult to resolve, which the two parts of this memorial contain, it appears that M. de Voltaire is well acquainted with what relates to experimental philosophy; and that he has himself well considered such subjects.

Paris, April 26, 1741.

PITOT, CLAIRAUT.

I certify that the above copy is conformable to the original.

Paris, April 27, 1741.

Dortous de Mairan, perpetual
secretary of the royal academy of sciences.

LETTER

FROM THE ADVOCATE MANNORY*,

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

May 10, 1744.

IT is, fir, a long while since you heard from me; and it is very mortifying that I am compelled to call your attention to me by a history of my misfortunes. Yet I too well know the sentiments of your heart to yield to my fears. My father is still living; he is eighty years old, and is extremely feeble. At his

* He received alms at my hands, and wrote a libel against me. *Note of M. de Voltaire.*

death I shall possess more than a hundred thousand francs ; but I have not received a crown. My profession abounds with difficulties ; and, to pursue it, assistance is required, on which I have relied, and which has failed me. I have been afflicted with long and severe sickness, and though at length I regained my health, my practice had declined. I afterwards formed an acquaintance with a rich devotee ; and, having incurred much expence in dress to enable me to appear suitably at her table, she barbarously forbade me the house. At last, sir, the poor M. de Fimarçon applied to me for assistance and counsel, and as I thought his af-

fairs promising I dedicated my whole time and labour to the prosecution of his suit. My illness had deprived me of half my business, and I lost the remainder by giving my whole time to M. de Fimarçon.

I flattered myself that I should acquire honour by extricating him from that affair, and that his gratitude would sufficiently indemnify me. Every thing has been unsuccessful, sir. Mean while I was three months in search of a house ; on the twenty-third of December I hired one, and since that time the workmen have been employed in preparing it for my reception ; so that six
2 months

months have passed in which I have been without a house, without chambers, and consequently without employment.

Judge, sir, of my situation. I could not procure a crown from my father. He who has been inflexible during his whole life, does not become feeling at the age of eighty. M. Dodun, the old receiver-general, of whom I have hired my house in the Isle*, has made me wait, but he has expended four thousand francs to make the house commodious for me, which will be to my advantage. I have some furniture

* A part of Paris.

which, were they on the spot, would serve my purpose. I have not therefore, sir, any present occasion for more money than will enable me to remove my furniture to the place which of course is an object of importance, to pay some trifling debts which I have contracted in the course of six months, and to leave me a small sum with which I may open my chambers, and subsist till I shall fall into practice, which I cannot fail to do.

I have frequently heard, sir, that the unfortunate are permitted to boast a little. Claiming this privilege, to which my situation has given me too

clear

clear a title, I may declare that I do not fear any advocate who is at present at the bar. If I find assistance I shall soon recover my losses, and my chambers will have their use; in the course of a year my practice will probably be considerable; and my father must, in the end, leave me the property which he cannot carry away with him. But, should I not procure any aid, my my house will become useless; I shall be no longer able to appear at the courts; and I shall be inevitably ruined; for I have no talents for any other employment. I will give you all the security in my power; my wife and I

will engage jointly and separately for the debt; or I will even give bills of exchange for it, provided sufficient time is granted me for the payment.

Will you abandon me, sir, and forget your long friendship for me? I am one of your oldest partisans; and the defender of Oedipus ought not to perish for want in the midst of the fairest hopes; nor does he ask for more than a little assistance. Your will have the honour of patronising an advocate; and, if he becomes celebrated, the work will not be unworthy of you!

Though

Though you have hitherto done so much and in various ways, this may perhaps be wanting to your fame. My whole reliance is on you, sir ; for the times are frightful, since nobody is interested in behalf of talents. You alone know all who possess them ; and you are their protector ; and, should you think that I am among the number you will not surely forsake me. My fortune then depends on the judgment which you shall entertain of my capacity, and I expect your decision with confidence. I lodge with M. Dubois, at the *Palais Royal, Rue de la Comédie Française*. Before you enable me to
remove

remove to my house, I shall look for
the honour of your answer. I am, with
the profoundest respect,

Sir,

Your most humble, &c.

Y. MANNORY.

LET-

LETTER

FROM THE SAME.

Thursday Morning.

YOU gave me permission fir, again to remind you of my situation after your return from the country. I appear respectable enough in my counfellow's gown ; but I am in total want of clothes ; nor can I pay any visits, which deranges all my affairs. Be so good as to inform me, fir, if you have thought of M. Thiriot. I have had but four sous to subsist on for six days, and you have promised me some small assistance ; do
not

not withhold it at present, sir. Were I properly dressed I should be in a condition to pursue my practice, and my situation would change. I have the promise of many causes, but they are not yet ready for trial. We approach the vacations, and the time is therefore unfavourable. Will you sir, mean while, suffer me to die of hunger? I did not eat yesterday; and the day before bread was my only food; but it was a feast. I cannot decently go out in my gown, and my dress is in too bad a state to be seen. I dare not therefore visit any one; nor have I money to procure any thing at home. My situation is terrifying! For God's sake, sir, give the bearer of
this

this letter what you may think proper for my present relief; he is a person on whom you may rely. Pray inform me what M. Thiriot does. Will you permit an old servant to perish; a man who I venture to say possesses talents, and who is actually in sight of the harbour? His vessel is somewhat impaired; but he needs only assistance to enter the port. I am with the most lively gratitude,

Sir,

Your humble &c,

MANNORY.

LET-

LETTER

FROM J. J. ROUSSEAU

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Paris, Dec. 11, 1745.

SIR,

I HAVE endeavoured during fifteen years to render myself worthy of your esteem and your zeal for the interest of youthful poets in whom you discover talents. But having composed the music of an opera, I find myself, I know not how, metamorphosed into a musician. In this quality the Duke de Richelieu committed to my care the alteration of the *Divertissements* which

you

you have introduced into the Princess of Navarre, and he even required me to make such changes in the original plan as were necessary to adapt it to your new subject. I made respectful remonstrances, the duke insisted, and I obeyed; it is the only thing which can be done by a man in my situation. M. Ballot is charged to communicate the alterations to you; which I have endeavoured to execute in the fewest words possible, and that is the only merit I can give them. Do me the favour, sir, to examine them, or rather to substitute others more worthy of the place which they were designed to occupy.

I also

I also hope, sir; that you will please to give your opinion of the recitative before it is performed, and point out to me the places in which I have departed from good taste, that is to say from your conception. Whatever may be my success in these trifling essays, they will ever make me proud should they procure me the opportunity of being known to you, and of expressing the admiration and profound respect with which I have the honour to be,

Sir, your very humble, &c.

J. J. ROUSSEAU, *Citizen of Geneva.*

LET.

L E T T E R

FROM THE SAME.

Paris, Jan. 30, 1750.

SIR,

ONE Rousseau* formerly declared himself your enemy least he should be compelled to acknowledge himself your inferior. Another Rousseau, without the genius of the former, thought proper to imitate his malicious conduct. I am distinguished by the same name as those, but possess neither the talents of

* *Jean Baptiste.* We do not know the other Rousseau; it was not the Rousseau of Thoulouse, author of the *Journal Encyclopédique*, nor the Rousseau of Gotha.

the one nor the presumption of the other, and am still less capable of their injustice to you. I am very willing to live unknown, but not dishonoured; and such I should deem myself had I failed in the respect which all men of letters owe to you, and which all those entertain who merit respect themselves.

I will not dwell on this subject, nor violate, even when you are the object, the law I have resolved to observe never to address the praises of any one to himself. But, sir, I will take the liberty to say that you formed an unworthy judgment of an honest man when

you believed him capable of returning ingratitude and arrogance for your kindness and politeness to him in the affair of the *Fêtes de Ramire**. I have not forgotten the letter with which you honoured me on that occasion, and which convinced me that, notwithstanding base calumnies, you are the true patron of rising talents which need protection. You deigned to promise your friendship to the first efforts of my mind; they were unsuccessful, and that was what I ought to have expected. A solitary being who knew not how to speak, a timid, disconcert-

* La Princesse de Navarre, which was afterwards called, Les Fêtes de Ramire.

ed man did not dare to present himself to you : and what would have been my title ? But it was confidence and not zeal that I wanted ; fearing to intrude on your observation, I expected from time a favourable occasion to testify to you my respect and gratitude.

From that day I renounced letters and the delusive hope of acquiring fame ; despairing to obtain that object by the aid of genius I have disdained to owe it, like ordinary men, to indirect means. But I never shall renounce my admiration of your works. You have painted friendship and every virtue as a man who understands and loves them.

I have

I have

I have heard envy murmur but have rejected its clamours, and have said without fear of deceiving myself: “These writings which elevate the mind and excite fortitude are not the productions of a man indifferent to virtue.”

Nor did you form juster notions of a republican, since I was known to you as such. I adore liberty, and equally detest despotism and servitude, and would not impose either on any man. Such principles ill sympathize with insolence; which is oftener the sentiment of slaves, or of men still more vile than those, little authors who are jealous of great talents.

I declare to you then, sir, that not only Rousseau of Geneva never held the discourse you have attributed to him, but also that he is incapable of such language. I do not flatter myself that I shall deserve the honour of being known to you; but if ever I enjoy that happiness it will be, I hope, only by means worthy of your esteem.

I have the honour to be with profound respect,

Sir,

Your very humble, &c.

J. J. ROUSSEAU, *Citizen of Geneva.*

LET-

L E T T E R

FROM THE MARQUIS D'ADHEMAR

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Paris, Nov. 25, 1750.

I WAS, fir, at the time informed of the ingratitude and insolence of the insignificant d'Arnaud toward you, and I expreffed my indignation at his conduct. I even defired M. d'Argental to refer back to the letter of Fréron, and to take a copy of it. This letter was in the hands of every one, and was circulated in fo difadvantageous a manner that I wifhed to fee the

preface, which was complained of, and which was accused of being mutilated. It appeared to me as simple as I could wish, and I found nothing to blame in it but the name of the author and his style. In short, sir, I do not doubt that the king, whom you serve, will do you speedy justice. He is fortunate who has occasion to defend the truth before a monarch, who himself patronizes and disseminates truth.

Yet, notwithstanding this assurance, sir, I must again exhort you to assume greater fortitude. A splendid fame, and perfect tranquillity are rarely found friends and companions.

But

But to return to this worthless man. I am this instant informed that he has just written a new letter to Fréron, in which he declares that the matter is entirely accomodated. In the name of God, sir, while you patronise true talents, beware of those drones. They preserve no remembrance of what they owe you, except it be to injure their benefactor. This subject recals to my mind that a person* told me one day, that, being placed at the theatre near the Abbé Desfontaines and d'Arnaud, he heard the first reproach the other with entertaining some attachment to you. But, sir, answered

* M. Dutartre.

d'Arnaud,

d'Arnaud, you do not consider that he serves me and that I owe him my gratitude. Oh, replied the abbé, we may receive obligations from him when we have occasion ; but we must calumniate him.

You see that the man has not forgotten this lesson, nor has been slow to put it in practice.

Adieu, sir ; disdain this vile race ; and endeavour to arm yourself with philosophy respecting events. Truth is ever finally triumphant, and envy sinks under the weight of great reputations.

LET-

LETTER

FROM THE SIEUR GUYOT DE MERVILLE*,

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Lyons, April 15, 1755.

I Imagine, sir, you must be informed that I have been settled at Geneva these two years. In the kind of necessity to which I was reduced by the unjust conduct of the French comedians of Paris of quitting that place, there was no retreat which better suited my natural

* The answer of M. de Voltaire will be found in the fourth volume of the General Correspondence, erroneously dated 1754, together with an extract from this letter.

inclination

inclination for repose and liberty; and I am so much the more satisfied with my choice as other reasons have led you to the same asylum. But it is not enough that our inclinations happen to be mutual, our sentiments also should be in unison. How painful would it be to each of us if, inhabiting the same place and visiting the same families, we can neither see nor converse with each other without restraint and perhaps bitterness. I know that I have offended you, but it was not by indulging any of those passions which are at once a disgrace to literature, and human nature.

My

My attachment to Rousseau, and my complaisance to the Abbé Desfontaines were the sole causes of the offence I have given you. Their death has avenged you of them; and the little good I did by my sacrifices to them does not permit me to lament their death.

A thousand men in my situation would tell you, sir, that they esteem you more than your most zealous partisans, because their esteem was more consistent and less blind. The proof, on my side, is incontestible. D'Auberval, the comedian at Lyons, whose talents you have admired, and whose
character

character you would adore did you know him as I do, can assure you that I charged him with the verses, which I now send you, three days before your sudden and unforeseen departure. I availed myself of your taking this city in your route; and through which I was also passing. These verses are yet more seasonable than ever, as I shall be at Geneva on the 22d of this month, and as we shall both be settled there. I have nothing to add but the following offers.

I have written a criticism on your works in four volumes, which are yet in manuscript; those I will send to
you.

you. Prefixed to my first comedy is a letter with which you were offended, as I have been formely told, by Rouffet; I will suppress that letter in the edition of my works which I am preparing. The Abbé Desfontaines published two poems which he excited me to write against you; I will suppress those also: and at this price will I merit your friendship.

I will do more; my fugitive pieces in two volumes are dedicated to a gentleman of the country of Vaud, who is anxious to be known to you, and whose acquaintance would give you pleasure; to convince the public of the sincerity of my regard for you I am
ready

ready, with your permission, to dedicate my Theatre in four volumes to you. I do not think you can require any thing further.

But speaking of editions, it is time, fir, that you resolve, as well as myself, to publish an edition of your works, avowed by yourself, and executed under your own inspection. The public expect this with impatience, and they will not believe any thing to be yours which you do not yourself give them. At Geneva, you are in a place which will permit you to execute this design; and I will undertake, if you think proper, a part of the work, in the
same

same manner as thirty year since at the Hague you confided to my care the correction of the proofs for the Henriade.

I send a copy of this letter, and the verses which are enclosed, to M. de Montpérour, who honours me with his esteem and friendship. I flatter myself that he will be very happy to give the whole plan his protection. But is it necessary that the resident should join his recommendation to the step which I take? Do you not know sir that it is greater to acknowledge our faults than never to have committed any, and more glorious to pardon than to avenge our-

selves? Merville addresses himself to
 Voltaire! You see that I finish poetically;
 but it is not as a poet, it is as a friend,
 an admirer, and a man who thinks, that
 I assure you of the particular esteem
 and perfect attachment with which I am,

Sir, &c.

GUYOT DE MERVILLE.

LET-

LETTER

FROM J. J. ROUSSEAU*,

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

September 10, 1755.

IN every respect, sir, it is my duty to express my gratitude to you; and, while I offered the rude outlines of my sorrowful reveries, I thought not of making a present worthy of you, but of acquitting myself of an obligation by rendering the homage which we all owe to you as our chief. Sensible,

* See the letter of M. de Voltaire, to M. Rousseau, dated August 30, 1755, in the fourth volume of the General Correspondence.

beside, of the honour which you do my country, I participate in the gratitude of my fellow citizens, and hope that it will augment in proportion to the profit they may derive from your precepts. Embellish the asylum you have chosen, enlighten a people worthy of your lessons, and do you, who so well know how to display liberty and virtue, teach us to cultivate them in our actions as we adore them in your writings. All who approach you ought to learn from you the road to glory and immortality.

You perceive, sir, I do not aspire to the reputation of once more leading men

into the woods; not but that I regret my part of the loss of a state of nature. With respect to yourself, sir, to make you a savage would be a miracle so great that it can be wrought only by God, and so pernicious that it can be willed only by the devil. Do not therefore attempt to walk on all-fours; to do which no man on earth is less qualified. You teach men too effectually to stand firmly not to remain erect yourself. I own the disgrace which attends on celebrated men of letters is great indeed, nor do I deny that the evils are numerous which are attached to human nature, and which appear to be independent of our vain knowledge. Men

have opened so many sources of misery to themselves that their happiness is but little increased when they chance to escape a single misfortune. There are secret connections, however, in the progress of things which are unperceived by the vulgar, but which do not escape the thoughtful eye of the philosopher.

It was neither Terence, Cicero, Virgil, Seneca, nor Tacitus, who caused the crimes of the Romans and the misfortunes of Rome. But without the slow and secret poison which insensibly corrupted the most vigorous government of which history has preserved the remembrance, Cicero, Lucretius, Salust,

lust, and such men had never existed or they had never written. The amiable age of Lælius and Terence insensibly introduced the brilliant period of Horace and Augustus; and, in fine, the horrid epoch of Seneca and Nero, that of Tacitus and Domitian. A taste for the arts and sciences has its birth in a secret vice which it soon augments in its turn; and if it be true that all human acquirements are pernicious to the species, those of the mind and of knowledge, which increase our pride and multiply our wanderings, will soonest accelerate men's misfortunes. Yet, there necessarily comes a time in which those acquirements are requisite to stay

the progress of evil : it is the steel which must remain in the wound, least, in removing it, the wounded should expire.

As to myself, had I pursued my first vocation and neither read nor written, I should have been unquestionably more happy ; yet if letters could now be entirely effaced, I should be deprived of the only pleasure which is left me. It is in letters that I find a consolation for all my misfortunes ; it is among their illustrious children that I taste the delights of friendship, and learn to enjoy life and despise death. To them I owe the little merit I have, and to them

am I also indebted for the honour of being known to you. But let us consult interest in our concerns, and truth in our writings. Although there need philosophers, historians, and truly learned men to enlighten the world and conduct its blind inhabitants, yet, if the wise Memnon has not misinformed me, I know nothing more ridiculous than a nation of sages. Confess, sir, if it be right that great minds should instruct men, the vulgar ought to receive their precepts. If each takes upon himself to give instruction, where will those be who are to receive it? The lame, says Montaigne, are ill calculated for bodily exercise, or decrepid souls

souls for the exercises of the mind. Nevertheless, in this learned age, we see none but the lame willing to teach others to walk.

Ordinary men receive the writings of the learned to criticise them, and not to instruct themselves. Never has the world swarmed with such dwarfs in intellect; they crowd the theatre, the coffee houses resound with their sentences, the bookfellers stalls are covered with their writings, and I hear the *Orphan* criticised, because it is applauded, by a school boy so little capable of perceiving its defects that scarcely can he feel any of its beauties.

Let

Let us look for the first source of all the disorders in society, and we shall find that the miseries of mankind proceed from error rather than ignorance; and that what we do not know is much less prejudicial to us than that which we think we understand. Now what surer means to run from error to error than the rage of knowing every thing? Had not men pretended to know that the earth does not turn on its axis, they had not punished Galileo, for having affirmed that it did turn. If none but philosophers had claimed the title of philosopher, the Encyclopédie had experienced no persecution. If a hundred despicable beings had not aspired

pired to fame, you would have been left to the peaceful enjoyment of yours, or at least you would have had to contend with none but adversaries worthy of you. Be not surpris'd then should you feel some thorns which are inseparable from the flowers that adorn superior talents. The calumnies of your enemies are the followers of your triumph; as formerly satyric acclamations were those of the Roman generals. It is the public eagerness for your writings which produces the thefts of which you complain; but the assimilating them with others is not easy, for neither iron nor lead unites with gold.

Permit

Permit me, in consideration of the interest which I take in your repose and our instruction, to advise you to disdain vain clamours, by which it is less the design to make you do ill than to divert you from producing good. The more you shall be criticised, the more must you be admired; and a work of genius is a terrifying answer to weak reproaches. Who will dare to attribute books to you, which you have not written, while you continue to produce inimitable works?

I am proud of your invitation, and if this winter leaves me so circumstanced that I can visit my native country in
spring

spring I will avail myself of your goodness. But I would rather drink the water of your fountain, than the milk of your cows; and with respect to the herbs of your orchard, I much fear to find nothing there but the *lotos* which is only pasture for beasts, or the *moli* which prevents men from becoming brutes. I am sincerely and respectfully, &c.

J. J. ROUSSEAU, *Citizen of Geneva.*

LET

L E T T E R

FROM THE ABBÉ AUBERT,

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

(Accompanied by a Copy of his book of Fables.)

Paris, January 10, 1758.

O toi* dont les sublimes chants
Imitent les sons fiers des clairons, des trompettes,
Daigne écouter mes chanfonnettes,
Daigne favoriser mes timides accens.
Des cœurs ambitieux admirable interprète,
Ta muse fait parler les princes, les héros ;
La

* Oh thou whose song, sublime, rivals the shrill
clarion and the trumpet proud, deign to listen to the
timid accents of my adventurous muse, and listen-
ing, not to condemn. Renowned interpreter of am-
bitious hearts, thou speakest with the tongues of
princes and of heroes. I bid the finch and the lin-
net

La mienne fait jaſer le ſerin, la fauvette ;
Par l'organe de l'âne, elle enſeigne les fots.

Si quelquefois, dans d'heureuſes images,
J'ai peint avec ſuccès le vice ou la vertu,
Voltaire, c'eſt à toi que l'hommage en eſt dû :
J'ai relu cent fois tes ouvrages.

I have ever thought, ſir, that the
firſt duty of a man who wiſhed to ac-
quire fame in any ſpecies of poetry,
would be to form his taſte on your
writings, and the ſecond to offer his
eſſays to your inſpection. I acquit my-
ſelf of this laſt, with much reliance on
your indulgence and advice. Hitherto
theſe
net prattle, and from the mouth of the aſs give leſ-
ſons to folly. And ſhould I by chance, in happy
allegory, paint vice and virtue as they are, to thee
Voltaire the praiſe is due ; for times unnumbered
have I read thy works.

those whom I have consulted have given me such various counsels, that I know not which to pursue. I am reproached by one for having too closely imitated la Fontaine; and by another, for not having sufficiently imitated him. This friend complains that the morals of my fables are too long; this, that they are too short; and a third would compel me to suppress them all, alledging, notwithstanding the example of all the fabulists, that the object of a fable should be so enforced by the fable itself as to pass for that species of commentary which is called the moral. I have critics who wish that my fables were all as simple as that of *La Cigale et La*

*Fourmi**; as if a writer of fables was condemned to be read by none but children.

This variety of opinions respecting my production has often led me to apply to myself the fable of the miller, his son, and the ass:

*Parbleu, dit le meunier, est bien fou du cerveau,
Qui prétend contenter tout le monde est son père†.*

You see, sir, how necessary it is I should be determined by a sound judgment and from which my critics cannot appeal, and I shall act according to your advice, if I can deserve that

* The grasshopper and ant.

† I see, said the miller, he must be mad who pretends to please every body.

the

the author of the *Henriade* should sacrifice some moments to the reading a few fables, and that he should deign to communicate his opinion to me. I expect this favour, sir, from your zeal to encourage rising talents, and I should at all times be proud to take lessons from the finest genius of France. I am, &c.

ÉPIÔRE DU MEME*.

MA muse † n'est pas assez vaine
 Pour espérer, par se effais,
 Egaler les brillians succès
 De l'ingénieux la Fontaine.
 Elle connaît tout le danger
 Du goût décidé qui l'entraîne ;
 Mais tu daignas l'encourager :
 Et si son vol est téméraire,
 Dès qu'elle t'a déjà su plaire,
 Que risque-t-elle à s'y livrer ?

Depuis

† My muse does not vainly hope, in her attempts, to equal the high renown of la Fontaine. She knew the danger into which she was led by the love of dulcet rhyme ; but thou deignest to encourage ; and, though her flight be daring, if thee she can but please, what has she to fear ? Since the

* In answer to M. de Voltaire's letter of March 22, 1758, addressed to the author of the fables. 5th Vol. of the general Correspondence.

Depuis qu'au pays de la feinte
 Un vif penchant me fait errer,
 Sans cesse une importune crainte
 Devant moi venait se montrer.
 Aujourd'hui la douce espérance
 Y guide, y ranime mes pas ;
 Je cède au séduisant appas
 D'une trop flatteuse indulgence.
 Eh, comment ne s'enivrer pas
 D'un encens que ta main dispense ?

Je n'ai pas les charmans pinceaux
 De l'ami de la Sablière ;

Mais
 time when the delight of poetry first hurried me
 into the land of fable, my dread has been conti-
 nual : but now sweet hope guides and animates my
 steps, and I cede to the seductive charms of indul-
 gence which flatters me but too much. Who
 would not be inebriated by incense, which thy
 hand dispenses !

I want the charming touches of the friend of la
 Sablière ; but of man and his mistakes I may draw

Mais sur l'homme et sur ses défauts,
Je puis dans de rians tableaux,
Répandre à mon tour la lumière,
Et du sceptre jusqu'au rabot,
Prouver à l'homme qu'il est un sot.
Tous les animaux, dans mes fables,
Lions, fourmis, aigles, moineaux,
Peuvent, par quelques traits nouveaux,
Trahir l'orgueil de mes semblables.
Ta voix a chanté des héros ;
Mais qu'il soit d'Athène ou de Rome,
De Pétersbourg ou de Paris,
Tes philosophiques écrits
Font voir que tout héros est homme.

Ecoutons
pleasant pictures, and in the palace or in the cot-
tage delineate his follies. I may teach every ani-
mal, whether lion, ant, eagle, or sparrow, by new
traits to discover the pride of human reason. He-
roes thou hast sung ; but whether of Athens or of
Rome, Petersburg or Paris, thy philosophic dic-
tates shew heroes themselves are no more than men.
The

Ecoutons ce rustre hébété
 Que fait raisonner la Fontaine :
 Il voudrait, plein de vanité,
 Que celui qui créa le chêne
 Dans ses œuvres l'eût consulté.
 L'homme est plus ou moins entêté
 De quelque orgueilleuse faiblesse.
 L'apologue fut inventé
 Pour corriger avec adresse
 Des grands l'insolente fierté,
 Des flatteurs l'indigne bassesse,
 Des petits l'indocilité.
 Heureux si, plein d'un zèle extrême
 Sur les ridicules d'autrui,

Un

The idiot clown of la Fontaine, swelled with vanity, wished that he who created the oak had but consulted him, in his work. Man is ever more or less inflated by some weak vanity ; and fable was invented artfully to correct the insolent haughtiness of the great, the base flattery of parasites, and the rude obstinacy of the vulgar. Happy the author who, all attentive to the absurdities of others, can

Un auteur corrigeait lui-même
 Les défauts qu'on remarque en lui,
 Mais quoi que l'on en puisse dire,
 Fier d'un si glorieux accueil,
 On verra croître mon orgueil
 Si mes fables te font sourire.

correct the defects discovered in himself. But rea-
 soning were vain ; for, should my fables but excite
 a smile from thee, I still shall feel increase of pride,

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS

By the Ambassador M. de Chauvelin, on a Letter written by M. de Voltaire to the King of Prussia, made by Order of the Ministry, in 1759.*

THE letter is good, and the reasoning and the manner are excellent. I have only two observations to make.

1st. I know not whether I would so positively present to him the idea of restitution. I imagine this must ever

* The original of Voltaire's letter was never found. That of the King, in answer, is inserted in the 2d Vol. of the Correspondence, and is dated September 22, 1759.

be

be a bitter draught, and I know not whether it will not injure his fame as much as his interest. Perhaps it will be necessary to soften this passage.

2d. I think it would be expedient further to explain to him the basis of a system of pacification which should originate in his own ideas, such as they are found in his last letter; consequently to me it appears that I should address him thus :

You will not make peace but in conjunction with the English, and you are right, for your honour is pledged; but why will you not make peace for
the

the English and for yourself at the same time? Have you not sufficient claims to their esteem, or ascendancy enough over them, to induce them to sacrifice some of their advantages to the honour of securing your own possessions? Would not the French, in compensation for such a benefit, be impelled and authorised to prevail on their allies to make concessions equivalent to those which the English shall have made in your favour? Will you not then become the author and the mover of these reciprocal concessions which shall reduce the whole to an equilibrium that will be desirable and beneficial to all parties?

parties? In a word, should you induce the English not to engross the dominion of the seas, the proprietorship of all the colonies, and of trade in general, can you doubt but that the French would engage your enemies to renounce these claims which to you are most noxious.

Such a paragraph modelled by the genius of M. de Voltaire, embellished by the powerful charms of his style, and combined with the knowledge he has of managing the king of Prussia and of the objects most proper to excite his attention, would, in my opinion, fully

fully display the grand outlines of a plan which it would be very fortunate should this monarch seize on, adopt, and bring to maturity.

-T E L-

L E T T E R

FROM THE COUNT DE TRESSAN,

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Commerci, July 29, 1759.

HIS Polish majesty, sir, has commanded me to supply his loss of sight by answering the charming letter he has just received from you, and by assuring you of his friendship for your person, and of his high esteem for your works.

His majesty again confirms the attestation which he commanded me to send you relative to the exact truth of

all the facts contained in your history of Charles XII. From you, sir, he is highly gratified to learn that the king his son-in-law, by renewing the ancient privileges of your manor lands, has afforded you a distinguished mark of his good will and esteem.

I cannot but be sensible, sir, how great your loss is in not reading characters traced by the hand which you would kiss with so much pleasure; a single word from this adored prince, who is continually performing every thing which you most love to praise in great kings, would to you be a thousand times more estimable than all
which

which the most faithful of your servants and friends can utter.

TRESSAN.

P. S. By king Stanislaus, scarcely legible.

I answer from the heart, being in want of eyes ; and assure you that I continually preserve sentiments of perfect esteem and friendship for you.

P. S. By Count de Tressan.

Your heart will easily divine what my dear and amiable master has written.—*I answer from the heart being in*

want

want of eyes, &c. Pity an active mind:
 (and how feldom are the minds of kings
 so !) pity one who is deprived of the
 pleasure of reviving his works, and who
 no longer can read, write, play on
 musical instruments, or see your old ac-
 quaintance*, at whose house his majesty
 has written this short postscript.

* *Ancienne Ami.* Some lady.

L E T T E R S

FROM THE SIEUR CLEMENT, OF DIJON,

TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

LETTER I.

Dijon, December 6, 1759.

S I R,

DID I not know you to be sufficiently wise to look with contempt on the baubles of grandeur so as not to be susceptible of them, I should feel no surprise that you had disdained to answer the letter I ventured to write to you, in which my heart described all its sensations. I was convinced when my hand was the faithful interpreter of my sentiments

timents that the dignity of yours would not suffer you to remain insensible to the afflictions of an unfortunate man, and that you knew how to dry up the tears which grief had caused to flow. I was persuaded that your bounty would not be implored in vain, that your arms would readily open to afford innocence an assylum, and that your heart was superior even to your understanding; such were, such still are, my thoughts; and these emboldened me to explain my melancholy situation in my first letter. Imagine, sir, whether I am not afflicted by your silence at present. Alas, perhaps you have supposed I should repay your friendship and favours

with the blackest ingratitude, and that I should be cowardly and criminal enough not to be grateful. Act, sir, as you please with respect to my other requests, but let me entreat you not to do me the injustice of thus suspecting my probity. This is the only wealth I now possess, it is a precious jewel which I wish to preserve from the general contagion. Your suspicions dim its lustre, but your generosity and greatness of mind may preserve and render it more resplendent. Affection, zeal, and respect, are all the wealth I have, and now are and ever will remain yours. Were you even to refuse me what I have requested with so much ardour,
but

but which it may be improper for you to grant, I should ever remain convinced your refusal was dictated by virtue, and that you were guided by reasons unknown to me; and I then should only be anxious of being informed what they were. In fine, sir, whatever your kind intentions may be, let me desire you would inform a youth of them whom suspense keeps in a state the most painful, and whose love would still be the same though you were to remain ignorant of its reality.

Perhaps, sir, you have not received my first letter; if so, and you should desire to see it, you will be pleased to inform me.

L 3

L E T-

LETTER II.

Dijon, May 17, 1762.

SIR,

PERMIT one of those who are most enamoured with the Belles Lettres without the power of studying them, and with these men of genius who study them with success, to take the present opportunity of renewing that homage which is more flattering to himself than to you. The sentiments which I have ingenuously avowed appear to have affected you, and for these I am sufficiently repaid should your feelings have been in union with mine.

The

The kindness which you have shewn toward me, induces me to ask a favour. During these short intervals which employment more gloomy have allowed me to dedicate to my love of poetry, I have formed the rash design of writing a tragedy, the subject of which is perhaps the most singular and interesting of any to be found in modern story. It is the death of Charles I. and the usurpation of Cromwell. The difficulties attending such a fable were great, nor have I by the labour of a year been able to surmount them. I have written nothing more hitherto than the plan of my piece; after having changed it several times, and most mercilessly burnt

one entire act, and more, which did not equal the high idea I had formed of my subject. I am not, however, discouraged, but have begun again; yet my ardour has slackened, because I have been informed that you have for some time been yourself at work on the same subject, and that soon or late you intend to present your piece to the public.

You may well imagine, sir, that my rashness is not quite great enough to contend with an antagonist like yourself. It belongs only to a few to enter the lists with and to vanquish their masters. I should quickly abandon
my

my plan, were I certain that you had formed the same ; and especially as this perhaps will be the only work I shall ever write during a life of obscurity ; and banished as I am to a town in which there are men of wit, but who make no use of that quality, and who hate or despise those who do. My days will be shortened by labour, which is the only wealth and the only pleasure of which fortune could not deprive me ; and Cromwell only, to whom I should dedicate the remains of life, would preserve the memory of a youth who grew too early old because he began to think too soon.

Yes,

Yes, sir, at the age of seven, I endeavoured to cultivate poetry, and you may easily imagine how much assiduous study injures the health of a child. Excuse me for having so long detained you on subjects of so little moment. Only let me entreat you to inform me whether I ought to continue my project, and whether you have not anticipated my design. Deign to afford me lessons, of which I am too much in want, and of which I am so desirous, that you will scarcely refuse them. By your aid, I may discover impediments which I have not foreseen, or beauties which I could never have invented. You will encourage me in executing a
difficult

difficult task, and will teach me to avoid rocks and quick-sands, among which I should otherwise be wrecked, but which your genius will enable me to escape. Do not, I conjure you, deny the request of a youth who seeks for instruction, who respects his masters, who loves your person because he loves your works in which your soul shines forth, and who is indebted to you for every thing, because from you he has learned to think.

I am, sir, with all the esteem of heart, &c.

CLEMENT.

L E T-

LETTER III.

Paris, December 5, 1768.

I HAVE broken my bonds, sir, and have shaken off classic dust. Here am I at Paris, in freedom and almost happiness, and in the centre of the arts where I so long have desired to live and cultivate literature. But, ah, sir, how strangely have literature and good taste gone to decay! How little does all I see assimilate with the ideas I had formed from reading our best authors! I am fallen as it were from the clouds. I understand no man, and no man understands

derstands me. They tell me of comedies which make the audience weep, and I see tragedies which oblige me to laugh. I am desired to write in the same taste, and I do not know what taste they mean. It is necessary, however, that I should submit; and I begin to perceive the thing is not so very difficult.

I really, sir, do not know what will hereafter be thought of the present age; but I am convinced that it is intolerably like the age of Seneca and Silius Italicus. You, sir, are the man who beheld the meridian of the Belles Lettres, and for the decline of which
you

you long have consoled us; but you have the affliction of not leaving any hope behind you of similar consolation.

Pardon this complaint sir, from a gloomy partisan of old taste, and an admirer of your works. I cannot prevail on myself ever to think that beautiful which never can be so, unless it be proved that Molière, Racine, Boileau, and yourself are wretched writers.

But I come to the main purport of my letter, which is to thank you for having procured me the acquaintance of M. de la Harpe. I cannot sufficiently praise his politeness, the goodness of
the

the advice he has given me, and particularly the veneration which he expresses for you. He swears by your name as Philoctetes swore by Hercules; and I have no doubt but that he will himself nobly fill the part of Philoctetes. He will certainly be well able to oppose the torrent, and combat the monsters of literature. But the evil is too deeply rooted; his example will come to late; and he will only be able to save himself from the general shipwreck.

I did not find the minds of men much prejudiced in favour of my *Médée non-Magicienne* (Medea no Enchantress.)

chantrefs.) They took it ill that I should rob the stage of a splendid spectacle which produced so fine an effect in the opinion of merchant's clerks, and of the vulgar. They further add that the magic invocations of *Longepierre* have their charms; and that his versification will again become pleasant to our ears. In vain did I affirm with you that an enchantress cannot affect the passions which are totally destroyed by magic, and would be thought ridiculous in any other character except *Medea*, and that it is disgusting and monstrous for her to kill her children without any cause, since she might have carried them off in her carr. I added

a thousand other things of the same nature, but to no effect; and I find the people of this philosophic age are more addicted to sorcery than they suppose.

In fine, sir, I have put my piece into the hands of M. le Kain, and am waiting for his opinion previous to the reading of it to the actors collectively. I do not augur much success, but I will console myself by writing better.

As my revenues are not sufficiently great to enable me to subsist entirely as a poet, I am in search of some proper employment either as a secretary or a teacher in some good family. If, sir,

you should be able to assist my project by the means of your acquaintance, I should add this to the many favours you have already done me, and my gratitude would end only with my life.

I have the honour sir, to be, with the most sincere admiration and attachment,

CLEMENT.

LET-

you

M

Vol. II.

LETTER

FROM THE EX-JESUIT PAULIAN,
TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Avignon, December 4, 1765.

SIR,

IT is exceedingly flattering to me that the greatest genius of the age should think proper to cast a glance over my works. I am sorry that the third edition of the dictionary, after which you enquire, is not yet finished. When it shall appear, with an additional volume, I will do myself the honour of presenting it to you ; and hope it will be less defective than that which I now send.

M 2

In

In the mean time, let me entreat you to accept a copy of my *Traité de paix entre Descartes et Newton* *. Should it merit your approbation, I shall from this be certain that it will merit immortality.

I have the honour to be, with respect, &c.

PAULIAN, Professor of experimental Philosophy, in the Jesuits College, at Avignon.

* Treaty of Peace between Des Cartes and Newton.

LET.

L E T T E R

FROM M. THIRIOT TO M. DE VOLTAIRE.

Paris, Friday, Jan. 13, 1769.

Nec si plura velim, tu dare deneges.

YOU, my old friend, my honour,
and my support, are the only man in
the world to whom I can write with
my present freedom.

Frontis ad urbanæ descendo præmia.

For these two years I have habitually
paid the tribute which age owes to na-
ture. An asthma was my prevailing
and familiar malady ; however, a se-
vere regimen, and a plant which I do

not know, but of which I have fortunately procured a good stock, though I have no occasion to use it at present, caused every symptom to disappear toward autumn. My health therefore is as good as I could wish, but my trifling fortune and my affairs are in the utmost confusion. I have for three years paid 600 livres annually, in consequence of the engagements into which I entered at the marriage of my daughter.

The following is the state of my income: 1200 livres from the king of Prussia, of which only a thousand are clear profit, 200 being set apart to pay

for

for the journals and papers from which I make my extracts, and for copying those and other works which I find it necessary to add. These 1000 livres from the king of Prussia, with an annuity of 2600 livres, which is secured on the *Hotel de Ville*, and 400 livres per annum, paid me by the Count de Lauraguais, gave me hopes of extricating myself from my difficulties, and of even continuing to pay the 600 livres according to my engagement. But a new perpetual charge has accrued by the necessity of my taking a second wife to aid me in my infirmities.

You did me the favour to inform me, in the beginning of 1766, when I

begged you to remember me in the distribution of your benefactions that I had deferred my application too long, and that as a punishment I must wait longer ; that I ought to have reminded you of my granary in the time of the harvest, and that every body had gleaned except myself, seeing I did not present myself among the rest. You promised to repair the ill consequence of my negligence, and you added in the most obliging and gratifying manner that you had the same regard for me as formerly.

This recalls to my mind with what zeal you undertook and endeavoured,
toward

toward the latter end of the regency, to procure half of your pension to be settled on me; and in what manner, thro' your solicitations, the Duke de Melun interested himself in the success of that design under the administration of the regent. But the sorrowful events which followed in rapid succession rendered ineffectual this uncommon instance of friendship and benevolence, and which was particularly noticed in the Holland Gazette. Hence, I have ever found myself encouraged to say to you, when there should be occasion, as Horace said to Mecænas while he enumerated his benefactions : *Nec si plura velim, tu dare deneges.*

And

And hence, also I was induced lately to say, at the table of the *Lieutenant Civil**, that I knew of no one but M. de Voltaire of whom I could ask a favour, or from whom I could receive one with pleasure.

I do not send you any literary intelligence, for I am too much engaged with little domestic vexations.

* An officer of the *Prevôt des Marchands*, of Paris.

MEMORANDUMS

Respecting M. de Voltaire, and particular Facts relative to that great Man; collected by me to serve as an Appendix to his History, written by the Abbe du Vernet.*

L'amitié d'un grand-homme est un bienfait des Dieux†.
Oedipe, *Acte I. Scène I.*

MAY I not be permitted to boast of a title which, while it created my fortune, constituted my happiness? I hope so, and that the facts I am about to state will justify the motto I have chosen, although otherwise it might appear too assuming.

* Le Kain. † The friendship of a great man is a gift of the gods.

The

The peace of 1748, having restored every species of diversion to the city of Paris, became the memorable epoch of a new institution of some societies formed of tradesmen who met together for the pleasure of playing dramatic pieces.

The first was established at the Hotel de Soyecourt in the Faubourg Saint-Honoré; the second, at the Hotel de Clermont-Tonnerre in the Marishes; and the third, at the Hotel de Jabac in the Rue Saint-Méri; of which last theatre I was the founder.

Among the young people who at that time played with some reputation, and

The

part

part of whom have since settled in the country, I am the only one who remained at Paris; and this circumstance, which I owed rather to my good fortune than any superiority of talents, happened in the following way:

The room in which we performed in the Hotel de Jabac being in such condition that the repairing of it could be no longer delayed, we were under the necessity of requesting permission of the comedians of the Hotel de Clermont-Tonnerre to play on their theatre, alternately with them. An agreement was accordingly entered into by both parties, in the month of July, 1749,

by which we were bound to pay half the expences ; and we opened with Sidney and George-Dandin.

It will be readily supposed that the emulation of the two companies would excite disputes in the public, the result of which could not be favourable to one without diminishing the reputation which the other till then had enjoyed. The audience were divided in their opinion of these gentlemen and of those, of the young ladies of this theatre and and the young ladies of that. The first were more pleasing, but the other displayed more knowledge of the theatre, and more grace and art, &c. Thus
were

were the public amused and combatted some for the company *de Tonnerre*, and others for the company *de Jabac*. But who could have imagined that a society of young people who united pleasure and decorum could provoke the jealousy and complaints of the high-priests of Melpomene? Yet, their influence interrupted our performances, and a Janfenist priest re-established them. The Abbé de Chauvelin, *Conseiller-Clerc* of the parliament of Paris, condescended to employ his power in behalf of pupils against their masters, and we played the *Mauvais-riche*, a new comedy in five acts and in verse, written by M. d'Arnaud, to the most brilliant

brilliant assembly then in Paris; but it was received with little applause. This was in the month of February, 1750.

M. de Voltaire was invited by the author to see the representation; and, whether induced by his compassion for M. d'Arnaud or his complaisance to the actors who to the utmost exerted themselves to give some value to that feeble uninteresting work, this great man appeared well pleased, and particularly enquired who it was that played the part of the lover. He was informed that the performer was the son of a goldsmith of Paris who played for his amusement, but who really wished to make it his serious employment. He expressed

expressed to M. d'Arnaud a desire of knowing me; and desired him to engage me to pay him a visit on the following day.

The pleasure this invitation gave me was even greater than my surprise; but it is impossible for me to describe the sensations of my mind when I beheld this man whose eyes burned with imagination and genius. As I spake to him I felt myself penetrated with enthusiasm, admiration, and fear; but while I experienced these sensations, M. de Voltaire had the goodness to put an end to my embarrassment by taking me in his arms and thanking God for

having created a being who could excite his feelings by the repetition of such moderate verses.

He afterwards made several enquiries relative to my situation, and that of my father, the manner in which I had been educated, and the ideas I entertained of my future fortune. Having satisfied him on these subjects, and having partaken of a dozen cups of coffee mixed with chocolate, the only nourishment which M. de Voltaire took from five in the morning till three in the afternoon, I informed him with great earnestness that I knew no other happiness on earth than that of playing dramatic pieces ;
that

that a melancholy loss had left me master of my actions, and that enjoying a small patrimony of nearly seven hundred and fifty livres income, I had reason to hope that should I abandon my father's occupation, I should lose nothing by the change, provided I could one day be admitted into the king's company of comedians.

“ Ah my friend,” cried M. de Voltaire, “ never take that resolution; continue to perform for your pleasure, but think not of making this your profession. It is one of the greatest and most difficult talents, but it is degraded by unfeeling people and proscribed by

hypocrites. France shall one day esteem your art, but it will then no longer possess Baron, le Couvreur, or Dangeville. If you will renounce your design I will lend you ten thousand francs to employ in commerce, and you shall return the sum as it shall be convenient to you. Come to me again at the end of the week ; reflect well on the subject, and acquaint me with your positive determination."

Disconcerted, and moved almost to the shedding of tears, with the generous offer of this exalted being whom men have called avaricious, inflexible, and unfeeling, I wished to give way to
my

my sentiments in expressions of gratitude, and four times began a speech without being once able to finish it. At length I resolved to take my leave, which I attempted with a stammering voice; but as I retired he called me back and desired me to recite some morsels of any part which I had been accustomed to play. Without considering the subject I foolishly enough proposed to speak the celebrated couplet in the second act of *Gustavus*. “No, not Piron,” said M. de Voltaire, with a peircing and terrifying voice, “I wish not to hear bad verses. Repeat me any part you know from *Racine*.”

Fortunately I recollected that while I was at the College de Mazarin I had learned the whole tragedy of *Athalie* by having heard that play repeated numerous times by the scholars who performed it. I began therefore at the first scene and played *Abner* and *Joad* alternately. But I had not finished my task when M. de Voltaire suddenly cried with enthusiasm, “ Ah, my God what poetry, and how astonishing that this tragedy should be written throughout with the same purity and passion !” He then dismissed me ; and said, while he embraced me, “ I foresee that you will possess a most pathetic voice ; and that
you

you will become the delight of Paris ;
but think no more of a public theatre.”

This is an exact account of my first
visit to M. de Voltaire. The second
was more conclusive, as he consented,
after the most earnest solicitations on
my side, to receive me into his house,
and to allow me a yearly income ; he
built, over his own apartment, a small
theatre in which he had the goodness to
see me and the whole company to which
I belonged play with his neices. He
could not reflect without the strongest
displeasure that till then we had been
permitted to expend much money to
N 4 afford

afford amusement to our friends and to the public.

The expence which M. de Voltaire incurred by this temporary establishment, and his former disinterested offer to me, convinced me in the strongest manner that he was as noble and generous in his actions as his enemies were unjust while they ascribed to him the vice of sordid economy. These were facts of which I was myself a witness; but truth obliges me further to confess that M. de Voltaire did not only aid me with his advice for more than six months, but also that he defrayed my expences during the whole of that time,
and

and that since my being established in the theatre I have proofs of receiving from him more than two thousand crowns. At present he calls me *His great actor, His Garrick, His dear child!* These are titles which I owe solely to his partiality for me; but the title which my heart adopts is that of a respectful and grateful pupil.

And indeed I ought to be grateful since it was to M. de Voltaire alone that I owed the first notions of my art; and since it was solely through his interest that the Duke d'Aumont thought proper to grant the order for my first appearance at the theatre in the month
of

of September, 1750; the result of which was that, aided by a perseverance, proof against every obstacle, I, at the end of seventeen months, surmounted all opposition from the city and the court, and was entered on the list of the king's comedians in the month of February, 1752.

Whoever reads these details will observe that I am far from resembling those ungrateful hearts who blush to acknowledge a benefaction; and who, to complete their baseness, meanly calumniate their benefactors. I have known more than one of that kind connected with M. de Voltaire. I have been wit-
ness

ness of the depredations which have been made on him by people of every rank. Some he has pitied, silently despised others, but never avenged himself of any. The booksellers, whom he has prodigiously enriched by the various editions of his works, have ever publicly aspersed his character; but there is not one of them who has dared to attack him in a court of justice, conscious as they were of their guilt.

The friendship of M. de Voltaire is ever unshaken. His manner is impetuous, his heart good, and his soul compassionate; he is modest in an extreme degree, notwithstanding the praises which

which have been lavished on him by kings, by men of letters, and by a people assembled to hear and admire him ; profound and just in his opinion of the works of other writers, abounding with affability and politeness in his commerce with men, and inflexible toward those who have offended him. In these features his character will be seen drawn with truth.

He could never be reproached with having been the first to attack his adversaries ; but, after hostilities were commenced, he has appeared as a lion rushing from his retreat, and at such times

times some of his enemies have fallen before him, and others have taken flight.

I have heard him frequently say, that his being unable to possess the friendship of Crébillon gave him great affliction; that he had ever esteemed his abilities, but could never pardon his having refused his approbation to Mahomet.

I will say nothing of the sublimity of his various talents; in whatever way he exercised them, he displayed erudition, wit, taste, and philosophy; and

Europe

Europe will pronounce his eulogium. His works, distributed over the earth, are sufficient to form the materials of his praise; and happy is he who can appreciate them, and speak worthily of this celebrated and extraordinary man.

The facility with which he wrote is universally known; but few have been witnesses to such instances as the following, which I myself saw.

His amanuensis had lost or destroyed the fifth act of the tragedy of *Zulima*. M. de Voltaire produced another in a very short time, and which abounded
with

with new ideas, that circumstances had suggested.

He altered the character of Cicero, in the fourth act of *Rome Preserved*, when we performed that tragedy in the month of August, 1750, at the theatre of the Duchefs du Maine, at the Chateau de Sceaux. I think it is not possible that any one could be more true, more pathetic, or more enthusiastic than M. de Voltaire in this part. It was, indeed, Cicero himself, pouring forth his eloquence from the tribunal, against the destroyer of his country, of its laws, its manners, and its religion. I cannot
forget

forget that the Duchefs du Maine, after having expreffed her admiration of this new part, asked M. de Voltaire who was the performer of *Lentulus*; *Sura*, and that M. de Voltaire answered, “Madam, he is the beft of us all.” It was myfelf whom he treated with fuch diftinguifhed goodnefs, nor was it very flattering to the knights, counts, and marquiffes, whole companion I then was.

I will not conclude this article without naming fome other anecdotes which were within my own knowledge, and which may perhaps ferve to give ftill
more

more correct ideas of the character of M. de Voltaire.

It is well known that, on the death of the celebrated Baron, and on the retreat of Bauberg from the stage, both the comic and the tragic parts of these great actors were given to Sarrafin, who at that time did not approach near the excellence of his masters, a circumstance which drew a severe sarcasm from Voltaire, who had committed to him the part of Brutus in the tragedy of the same name. The piece was rehearsed at the theatre, and the feebleness of Sarrafin in his invocation to Mars, his want of vigour, grandeur, and dig-

nity throughout the first act, excited Voltaire's indignation to such a degree that he cried out, "Sir, do you recollect that you are Brutus, the most august of all the Roman Consuls, and that you must not address the god Mars as you would say, *Ah good Virgin, let me gain a prize of a hundred francs in the lottery!*"

The result of this new mode of instruction was that Sarrafin displayed no more strength or animation, for he did not possess those qualities, and was only a good actor when the scene required pathos. He knew not the art of painting the passions with energy, nor

nor was the soul of Mithridates, nor the dignity of Augustus ever perceived in him.

The celebrity which Mademoiselle Dumefnil had acquired in the part of Merope, and which she has uniformly maintained during twenty years is well known. Yet even this reputation was no protection from the railleries of M. de Voltaire. When she rehearsed Merope for the first time he observed that this famous actress did not inveigh against Polifonte in the fourth act with sufficient vehemence and passion. “I must be possessed by the devil,” said Madame Dumefnil,

“to assume the tone you desire.” “Yes, Madam,” answered Voltaire, we must be possessed by the devil to excel in any art !” I believe that M. de Voltaire then spoke a great truth.

He was one day asked his opinion respecting the propriety with which some preferred Mademoiselle Dumefnil to Mademoiselle Clairon, and the justness of that enthusiasm which this last excited in the public to the great mortification of the actresses who had served her as a model. The partisans of the old taste pretended that to seize on the soul and to excite its feelings, it was necessary to possess, like Mademoiselle

Dumefnil

Dumefnil, the magic wand of Corneille, and that Mademoiselle Clairon had it not. “She has it in the throat,” cried Voltaire; and the question was accurately decided.

A very young and beautiful girl, daughter of a *Procureur** belonging to the parliament, played with me the part of Palmire in Mahomet, on M. de Voltaire’s theatre. This amiable girl, who was but fifteen years old, was far from being able to speak with sufficient strength and grandeur the imprecations which it was her part to utter against her tyrant. She was young, handsome, and interesting,

* An Attorney.

and M. de Voltaire assumed more gentleness while he shewed her how far distant she was from the spirit of her part. “Madam,” said he to her, “imagine to yourself that Mahomet is an impostor, an atrocious villain, who caused your father to be assassinated, has just poisoned your brother, and who to crown his kindness would absolutely ravish yourself. If all this trifling treachery gives you a certain pleasure, your politeness to him is well judged. But if he excite the least disgust in you, this, Madam, is the tone that you should assume.”

Then M. de Voltaire himself repeated the imprecation and gave this poor
O
innocent

innocent girl, who was blushing with shame and trembling with fear, a lesson so much more precious as he joined precept to example; and she afterwards became a very pleasing actress.

In 1755, being at M. de Voltaire's house of the *Delices* near Geneva, which he had just obtained from the attorney-general Tronchin, he deposited in my hands the Orphan of China, which was at first in three acts, and which he named his hidden treasure. Speaking of a noble character in this tragedy which possessed great novelty, he said to me, "My friend, the inflexions of your voice are naturally soft and melodious,

ous, but beware of suffering any of those to escape you in the part of Gengis Khan. You must impress it strongly on your mind that I have painted him as a tyger who, while he caresses his female, strikes his talons into her sides. If the other performers find the piece languid in parts, I permit them to make curtailments. These are citizens that we must sometimes sacrifice to the safety of the republic. But take care that they use the licence with caution; for false critics are often more dangerous in dictating these sort of alterations, than men who are downright ignorant."

After

After my departure from Ferney, in the month of April 1762, M. de Voltaire formed a desire to have the Orphan of China played at his little theatre. The bookseller Cramer studied the part of Gengis Khan, under the instruction of the Duke de Villars. The pretensions of this nobleman to teach the art of performing on the stage are well known; he made his pupil Cramer a cold, insipid, declaimer. M. de Voltaire was not slow to perceive the defect; and, in the first rehearsal, he was more than ever convinced that a man may be at the same time a duke, a fine wit, and the son of a great man, without any of these titles giving him talents to
exercise

exercise the fine arts, knowledge to comprehend their principles, or taste to decide on their execution.

M. de Voltaire hissed Cramer; and threatened to torment him in this way till he should have changed his style of acting. The faithful Genevese applied with incredible application to forget the whole of his master's lessons, and returned to Ferney at the end of fifteen days, to repeat his part in a new manner before M. de Voltaire, who perceiving a very great change, cried with rapture to Madame Denis, "My Neice, God be praised! Cramer has disgorged his Duke!"

For

For more than thirty years Paris had never beheld a party as strong as that which was formed to oppose the first representation of the tragedy of Orestes, except indeed, that which was formed against Adelaide de Guesclan. Orestes was hissed from three till eight in the evening. Yet, the best informed part of the public, whose judgment alone survives temporary efforts because it is impartial, prevailed by degrees over Crébillon's zealots, and finally testified its satisfaction by the most unsuspected acclamations. It was in one of these inebriating moments that Voltaire sprang half out of his box, and cried with all his

his strength, "Go on Athenians! It is Sophocles!"

This frankness and admirable presence of mind every hour characterized the only man of whom we have collected any anecdotes. This which follows displays M. de Voltaire as nature formed him, that is, animated, eloquent, and ever philosophic.

In 1743, at the third or fourth representation of Merope, M. de Voltaire observed a defect in a part of the dialogue. On his return from the Marchioness du Chatelet's house, where he
had

had supped, he corrected the faulty part, made a paquet of his corrections, and ordered a fervant to carry them to the Sieur Paulin, a very worthy man, but a very moderate actor, whom Voltaire had educated, as he used to say, with great care to play his tyrants. The fervant observed to his master that it was past midnight, and that it would be impossible to awaken M. Paulin at that hour. "Away," replied the author of *Merope*, "tyrants never sleep."

DECLARATION
OF M. DE VOLTAIRE
TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

*[Remitted by him to his Majesty's Minister, at
Frankfort, 1753.]*

I AM dying ; and I protest before God and man that, being no longer in the service of his majesty the king of Prussia, I am not the less attached to his interest, nor less ready to obey his pleasure for the short time I have to live.

He arrested me at Frankfort for a collection of his poetry, of which he
made

made me a present, and I remained in prison till the book was brought from Hamburg. I have restored to the king's minister, at Frankfort, all the letters of his majesty which I had preserved as precious marks of the goodness with which he had honoured me. At Paris I will restore all the other letters which may be demanded by him.

His majesty wishes to recal a contract which he had deigned to make with me. I am certainly ready to return it with all the rest; and, as soon as it shall be found, I will restore it or cause it to be restored. This writing,
2 which

which was not a contract but altogether the effect of the king's goodness, and which has been without any effect, was on a peice of paper one half less than that which d'Arget took from my chamber to the king's apartment at Potsdam. It contained nothing more than thanks on my part for the pension which his majesty had granted me with the permission of the king my master, for that which he had also granted to my neice after my death, and for the cross, and chamberlain's key.

The king of Prussia deigned to write at the bottom of this scrap of paper, as well as I remember: *I sign with great*
pleasure

pleasure the grant which I have designed to make for more than fifteen years past. This paper, absolutely useless to his majesty, to myself, and the public, shall assuredly be returned as soon as it can be found among my other papers. I neither can nor will make the least use of it; and, to remove all suspicion, I declare myself guilty of treason toward the king of France, my master, and the king of Prussia if I do not deliver up this paper the instant it shall fall into hands.

My neice, who attends me in my sickness, engages under the same oath to restore it if it shall come into her possession; and till I can examine my

papers at Paris I entirely annul the said writing. I declare that I have no claim on his majesty the king of Prussia; and, in my present cruel situation, I look for nothing except the compassion which his greatness of mind owes to a dying man who has hazarded and lost all by his attachment to his majesty, who has served him with zeal, and has been useful to him but has never failed in respect to his person, and who relies on the goodness of his heart. I am obliged to dictate, being unable to write. I sign, with the profoundest respect, the purest innocence, and the most lively grief,

VOLTAIRE.

LES

LES J'AI VU,

Attribués faussement à M. de Voltaire, et qui le firent mettre à la Bastille, sous la régence, en 1716.*

TRISTES† et lugubres objets,
 J'ai vu la Bastille et Vincennes,
 Le Châtelet, Bicêtre, et mille prisons pleines
 De braves citoyens, de fidèles sujets :
 J'ai vu la liberté ravie,
 De la droite raison la règle pourfuivie :

J'ai

† Oh sight of gloomy woe ! I have seen the Bastile, Vincennes, the Châtelet, the Bicêtre, and a thousand other prisons gorged with brave citizens and faithful subjects. I have seen freedom in chains,

* Falsely attributed to M. de Voltaire; for which during the regency he was sent to the Bastile, in the year 1716.

J'ai vu le peuple gémissant
 Sous un rigoureux esclavage :
 J'ai vu le soldat rugissant
 Crever de faim, de soif, de dépit et de rage :
 J'ai vu les sages contredits,
 Leurs remontrances inutiles :
 J'ai vu des magistrats vexer toutes les villes
 Par des impôts crians et d'injustes édits :
 J'ai vu sous l'habit d'une femme
 Un démon nous donner la loi,
 Sacrifier son Dieu, sa religion, son ame
 Pour séduire l'esprit d'un trop crédule roi :
 J'ai vu un homme épouvantable,

Ce

and the people groaning in rigorous bondage. I
 have seen sages counteracted, and their remon-
 strances of no effect. I have seen magistrates op-
 press the kingdom by the worst of taxes and unjust
 edicts. I have seen a demon govern in a woman's
 form*, and sacrifice her God, her religion, and
 her soul, to seduce the mind of a too credulous

* Madame de Maintenon.

king.

Ce barbare ennemi de tout le genre-humain,
Exercer dans Paris, les armes à la main,
Une police abominable :

J'ai vu les tyrans impunis :

J'ai vu les gens d'honneur persécutés, bannis :

J'ai vu même l'erreur en tous lieux triomphante,
La vérité trahie, et la foi chancellante :

J'ai vu le lieu saint avili ;

J'ai vu Port-royal aboli ;

J'ai vu l'action la plus noire

Qui puisse jamais arriver ;

L'eau

king. I have seen a man of horror†, the barbarous enemy of the human race, with arms in his hand exercising at Paris authority the most abominable. I have seen tyrants unpunished, and men of honour persecuted and in exile. I have seen error every where triumphant, truth betrayed, and faith with staggering steps. I have seen holy places defiled, and Port-Royal abolished. I have seen the blackest act that ever can be committed ; not all

† M. D'Argenson.

O temps ! ô mœurs ! j'ai vu dans ce siècle maudit

Ce cardinal, l'ornement de la France

Plus grand encor, plus saint qu'on ne le dit,

Reffentir les effets d'une horrible vengeance :

J'ai vu l'hypocrite honoré :

J'ai vu, c'est tout dire, le jésuite adoré.

J'ai vu ces maux sous le règne funeste

D'un prince que jadis la colère céleste

Accorda, par vengeance, à nos desirs ardens :

J'ai vu ces maux, et je n'ai pas vingt ans.

which they were animated. Oh times ! Oh manners ! In this accursed age, I have seen that Cardinal who is the ornament of France, more great and holy even than fame reports him, feel the most horrible effects of vengeance. I have seen the hypocrite honoured, and in a word the jesuit adored. These evils I have seen, during the reign of a Prince whom heavenly wrath in vengeance formerly granted to our ardent wish. These evils have I seen, yet the age of twenty have not passed.

END OF THE JUSTIFICATORY PIECES.

MEMOIRS

and of the justiciary pieces.

have I seen, yet the age of twenty have not passed

merely granted to our anger with. These evils

France whom heavenly wrath in vengeance for-

These evils I have seen, during the reign of a

poetic honored, and in a word the just abandoned.

horrible effects of vengeance. I have seen the holy

and holy even than fame reports him, feel the most

dinal who is the ornament of France, more great

ness! In this accented age, I have seen that Car-

which they were animated. Oh times! Oh man-

For in this man, it is not in his age.

Accords by vengeance, a nos deus adans.

It is in this man, it is in his age.

I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

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I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

I have seen in this man, it is in his age.

M E M O I R S

OF THE

L I F E

OF

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

M E M O I R S

OF THE

L I F E

OF

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

MEMOIRS OF VOLTAIRE.
MEMOIRS
M E M O I R S

O F

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

I WAS tired of the lazy and turbulent life led at Paris, of the multitude of Petit-Maitres, of bad books printed with the approbation of Censors and the privilege of the King, of the cabals and parties among the learned, and of the mean arts, plagiarism, and book-making which dishonour literature. In the year 1733, I met with a

B

young

young lady who happened to think nearly as I did, and who took a resolution to go with me and spend several years in the country, there to cultivate her understanding, far from the hurry and tumult of the world.

This Lady was no other than the Marchioness de Châtelet, who, of all the women in France, had a mind the most capable of the different branches of science. Her father, the Baron de Breteuil, had taught her Latin, which she understood as perfectly as Madame Dacier. She knew by rote the most beautiful passages in Horace, Virgil, and Lucretius, and all the philosophical works
of

of Cicero were familiar to her. Her inclinations were more strongly bent towards the mathematics and metaphysics than any other studies, and seldom have there been united in the same person so much justness of discernment, and elegance of taste, with so ardent a desire of information.

Yet, notwithstanding her love of literature, she was not the less fond of the world, and those amusements which were adapted to her sex and age : she, however, determined to quit them all, and go and bury herself in an old ruinous chateau, upon the borders of Champagne and Lorraine, and situated in a barren

and unhealthy soil. This old chateau
the ornamented, and embellished with
tolerably pretty gardens; I built a gal-
lery, and formed a very good collection
of natural history: add to which, we
had a library not badly furnished.

We were visited by several of the
learned, who came to philosophize in
our retreat: among others we had the
celebrated Koenig for two entire years,
who has since died Professor at the
Hague, and Librarian to her Highness
the Princess of Orange. Maupertuis
came also, with John Bernouilli; and
there it was that Maupertuis, who was
born the most jealous of all human be-
ings,

ings, made me the object of a passion which has ever been to him exceedingly dear.

I taught English to Madame du Châtelet, who, in about three months, understood it as well as I did, and read Newton, Locke, and Pope, with equal ease. She learnt Italian likewise as soon. We read all the works of Tasso and Ariosto together, so that when Algarotti came to Cirey, where he finished his *Neutonianismo per le Dame*, [The Ladies Newton,] he found her sufficiently skilful in his own language to give him some very excellent information by which he profited. Algarotti was a Venetian, the son of a very rich tradesman,

man, and very amiable; he travelled all over Europe, knew a little of every thing, and gave to every thing a grace.

In this our delightful retreat we sought only instruction, and troubled not ourselves concerning what passed in the rest of the world. We long employed all our attention and powers upon Leibnitz and Newton: Madame du Châtelet attached herself first to Leibnitz, and explained one part of his system, in a book exceedingly well written, entitled *Institutions de Physique*. She did not seek to decorate philosophy with ornaments to which philosophy is a stranger; such affectation never was part of her character, which
was

was masculine and just. The properties of her style were clearness, precision, and elegance. If it be ever possible to give the semblance of truth to the ideas of Leibnitz, it will be found in that book: but at present few people trouble themselves to know how or what Leibnitz thought.

Born with a love of truth, she soon abandoned system, and applied herself to the discoveries of the great Newton; she translated his whole book on the Principles of the Mathematics into French; and when she had afterwards enlarged her knowledge, she added to this book, which so few people under-

stood, an Algebraical Commentary, which likewise is not to be understood by common readers. M. Clairaut, one of our best Geometricians, has carefully reviewed this Commentary, an edition of it was begun, and it is not to the honour of the age, that it was never finished.

At Cirey we cultivated all the arts ; it was there I composed *Alzire*, *Mérope*, *l'Enfant Prodigue*, and *Mahomet*. For her use I wrote an Essay on Universal History, from the Age of Charlemagne to the present. I chose the epocha of Charlemagne, because it was the point of time which Bossuet stopped at, and be-
6 cause

cause I durst not again treat a subject already handled by so great a master.

Madame du Châtelet, however, was far from satisfied with the Universal History of this prelate; she thought it eloquent only, and was provoked to find that the labours of Bossuet were all wasted upon a nation so despicable as the Jewish.

After having spent six years in this retreat, in the midst of the arts and sciences, we were obliged to go to Brussels, where the family of du Châtelet had long been embroiled in a lawsuit with the family of Honibrouk.

Here

Here I had the good fortune to meet with a grandson of the illustrious and unfortunate Grand Pensioner De Wit, who was First President of the Chamber of Accounts, and had one of the finest libraries in Europe, which was of great use to me in writing my Universal History.

But I had a still superior happiness at Brussels, and which gave me infinite pleasure. I terminated the law-suit, by an accommodation, in which the two families had been ruining each other with expences for near sixty years, and gained two hundred and twenty thousand livres paid in ready money to the Marquis du Châtelet.

While

While I remained at Brussels, and in the year 1740, the unpolished King of Prussia, Frederick-William, the most intolerant of all Kings, and beyond contradiction the most frugal, and the richest in ready money, died at Berlin. His son, who has since gained so singular a kind of reputation, had then held a tolerably regular correspondence with me for above four years. The world never perhaps beheld a father and son who less resembled each other than these two Monarchs.

The father was an absolute Vandal, who thought of no other thing, during his whole reign, than amassing of money,
and

and maintaining, at the least possible expence, the finest soldiers in Europe. Never were subjects poorer, or King more rich. He bought up at a despicable price the estates of a great part of the Nobility, who soon devoured the little money they got for them, above half of which returned to the Royal coffers by means of the duties upon consumption. All the King's lands were farmed out to tax-gatherers, who held the double office of Exciseman and Judge; infomuch, that if a landed tenant did not pay this collector upon the very day appointed, he put on his Judge's robe, and condemned the delinquent in double the sum. It must
be

be observed, that if this same Excise-man and Judge did not pay the King by the last day of the month, the day following he was himself obliged to pay double to the King.

Did a man kill a hare or lop a tree any where near the Royal domains, or commit any other peccadillo? he was instantly condemned to pay a fine.

Was a poor girl found guilty of *making* a child? the father or the mother, or some other of the girl's relations, were obliged to pay his Majesty *for the fashion*.

The

The Baronness of Kniphaussen, who at that time was the richest widow in Berlin, that is to say, she had between three and four hundred a year, was accused of having brought one of the King's subjects clandestinely into the world in the second year of her widowhood. His Majesty thereupon wrote her a letter, with his own hand, wherein he informed her it was necessary, if she meant to save her honour, and preserve her character, she must immediately send him thirty thousand livres (1250l.) This sum she was obliged to borrow, and was ruined.

He

He had an Ambaffador at the Hague, whose name was Luifius ; and certainly of all the Ambaffadors that appertained to royalty, he was paid the worft. This poor man, that he might be able to keep a fire, had cut down fome trees in the garden of Hous-lardick, which then appertained to the Royal house of Pruffia. His next difpatches brought him word that the King, *his gracious Sovereign*, had ftopped, on this account, a year's falary to defray his damages, and Luifius, in a fit of defpair, cut his throat with the only razor he had. An old valet, happening to come in, called affiftance, and unhappily for him faved his life. I afterwards met with his Excellency at

4 the

the Hague, and gave him alms at a gate of the Palace, which is called the Old Court, and which belonged to the King of Prussia, where this poor Ambassador had lived twelve years.

Turkey, it must be confessed, is a Republic, when compared to the despotism exercised by this Frederic-William.

It was by such like means, only, that he could, in a reign of twenty-eight years, load the cellars of his Palace at Berlin with a hundred and twenty millions of crowns (fifteen millions sterling), all well casked up in barrels, hooped with iron.

He

He took great pleasure in furnishing the grand apartment of the Palace with heavy articles of massy silver, in which the worth of the workman surpassed not the sterling of nature. He gave to the Queen his wife, in charge, that is, a cabinet, the contents of which, even to the coffee-pot, were all gold.

The Monarch used to walk from his Palace cloathed in an old blue coat, with copper buttons, half way down his thighs, and when he bought a new one, these buttons were made to serve again. It was in this dress that his Majesty, armed with a huge serjeant's cane, marched forth every day to review his regiment

of giants. These giants were his greatest delight, and the things for which he went to the heaviest expence.

The men who stood in the first rank of this regiment were none of them less than seven feet high, and he sent to purchase them from the farther parts of Europe to the borders of Asia. I have seen some of them since his death.

The King, his son, who loved handsome, and not gigantic men, had given those I saw to the Queen, his wife, to serve in quality of Heidukes. I remember they accompanied the old state coach, which preceded the Marquis de Beauvau,

Beauvau, who came to compliment the new King in the month of November, 1740. The late King Frederic-William, who had formerly sold all the magnificent furniture left by his father, never could find a purchaser for that enormous ungilt coach. The Heidues, who walked on each side to support it, in case it should fall, shook hands with each other over the roof.

After Frederic-William had reviewed his giants, he used to walk through the town, and every body fled before him full speed. If he happened to meet a woman, he would demand why she staid idling her time in the streets, and ex-

claim, *Go—get home with you, you lazy
hussy; an honest woman has no business
over the threshold of her own door; which
remonstrance he would accompany with
a hearty box on the ear, a kick in the
groin, or a few well applied strokes
on the shoulders with his cane.*

The holy Ministers of the Gospel
were treated also in exactly the same
style, if they happened to take a fancy
to come upon the parade.

We may easily imagine, what would
be the astonishment and vexation of a
Vandal, like this, to find he had a son
endowed with wit, grace, and good
breeding;

breeding ; who delighted to please, was eager in the acquisition of knowledge, and who made verses, and afterwards set them to music. If he caught him with a book in his hand, he threw it in the fire ; or playing on the flute, he broke his instrument ; and sometimes treated his Royal Highness, as he treated the ladies and the preachers when he met with them on the parade.

The Prince, weary of the attentions of so kind a father, determined one fine morning, in 1730, to elope, without well knowing whether he would fly to France or England. Paternal œconomy had deprived him of the power

of travelling in the style of son and heir to a farmer-general, or even an English tradesman, and he was obliged to borrow a few hundred ducats.

Two young gentlemen, both very amiable, one named Kat, the other Keit, were to accompany him. Kat was the only son of a brave General Officer, and Keit had married the daughter of the same Baronefs of Kniphauffen, who had paid the ten thousand crowns about the child-making business before mentioned. The day and hour were appointed; the father was informed of the whole affair, and the Prince and his two travelling

com-

companions were all three put under an arrest.

The King believed at first, that the Princess Wilhelmina, his daughter, who was afterwards married to the Prince Margrave of Bareith, was concerned in the plot : and as he was remarkable for dispatch in the executive branch of justice, he proceeded to kick her out of a large window, which opened from the floor to the cieling. The Queen-Mother, who was present at this exploit, with great difficulty saved her, by catching hold of her petticoats at the moment she was making her leap. The Princess received a contusion on her left breast,

which remained with her during life, as a mark of paternal affection, and which she did me the honour to shew me.

The Prince had a sort of mistress, the daughter of a school-master, of the town of Brandebourg, who had settled at Potzdam. This girl played tolerably ill upon the harpsicord, and the Prince accompanied her with his flute. He really *imagined* himself in love, but in this he was deceived; his avocation was not with the *fair sex*. However, as he had pretended a kind of passion, the King, his father, thought proper that the damsel should make the tour of Potzdam, conducted by the hangman, and

and ordered her to be whipped in presence of his son.

After he had regaled him with this diverting spectacle, he made a transfer of him to the citadel of Custrin, which was situated in the midst of a marsh. Here he was shut up, without a single servant, for the space of six months, in a sort of dungeon, at the end of which time he was allowed a soldier as an attendant.

This soldier, who was young, well made, handsome, and played upon the flute, had more ways than one of amusing the royal prisoner. So many fine qualities have made his fortune ; and I
have

have since known him, at once Valet de Chambre and first Minister, with all the insolence which two such posts may be supposed to inspire.

The Prince had been some weeks in his palace at Custrin, when one day an old officer, followed by four grenadiers, entered his chamber, weeping. Frederic had no doubt he was going to be made a head shorter; but the officer still in tears, ordered the grenadiers to take him to the window, and hold his head out of it, that he might be obliged to look on the execution of his friend Kat, upon a scaffold expressly built there for that purpose. He saw,
2 stretched

stretched out his hand, and fainted. The father was present at this exhibition, as he had been at that of the girl's whipping-bout.

Keit, the other confidant, had fled into Holland, whither the King dispatched his military messengers to seize him. He escaped merely by a minute, embarked for Portugal, and there remained till the death of the most clement Frederic-William.

It was not the King's intention to have stopped there; his design was to have beheaded the Prince. He considered that he had three other sons, not one of whom wrote verses, and that they were
sufficient

sufficient to sustain the Prussian grandeur. Measures had been already concerted to make him suffer, as the Czarovitz, eldest son to Peter the Great, had suffered before.

It is not exceedingly clear, from any known laws, human or divine, that a young man should have his head struck off, because he had a wish to travel. But his Majesty had found judges in Prussia, equally as learned and equitable as the Russian expounders of law. Besides that his own paternal authority, in a case of need, would at any time suffice.

The Emperor Charles the Sixth, however, pretended that the Prince Royal,

as a Prince of the Empire, could not suffer condemnation but in a full Diet; and sent the Count de Sekendorf to the father, in order to make very serious remonstrances on that subject.

The Count de Sekendorf, whom I have since known in Saxony, where he lives retired, has declared to me, it was with very great difficulty indeed, that he could prevail with the King not to behead the Prince. This is the same Sekendorf who has commanded the armies of Bavaria, and of whom the Prince, when he came to the throne, drew a hideous portrait, in the history of his father, which he inserted in some

thirty

thirty copies of his *Memoires de Brandebourg* *. Who would not, after this, serve Princes, and prevent tyrants from cutting off their heads?

After eighteen months imprisonment, the solicitations of the Emperor, and the tears of the Queen, obtained the Prince his liberty; and he immediately began to make verses, and write music more than ever. He read Leibnitz, and even Wolf, whom he called a compiler of trash, and devoted himself to the whole circle of sciences at once.

* I gave the Elector Palatine the copy of this work, which the King of Prussia presented to me.

As

As the King, his father, suffered him to have very little to do with the national affairs, or as there rather, indeed, were no such affairs in a government the whole business of which was reviews, he employed his leisure in writing to those men of letters in France, who were something known in the world. These letters were some in verse, and others were treatises of metaphysics, history, and politics. He treated me as a something *divine*, and I him as a *Solomon*. Epithets cost us nothing. They have printed some of these ridiculous things in a collection of my works, and happily they have not printed the thirtieth part of them.

I took

I took the liberty to send him an exceedingly beautiful ink-stand ; he had the bounty to present me with a few gew-gaws of amber, and all the wits of the Parisian coffee-houses imagined with horror my fortune was made.

A young Courlander, named Keizerling, who was likewise a rhymers, and of course a favourite with Frederic, was dispatched from the frontiers of Pomerania to us at Cirey. We prepared a feast for him, and I made a fine illumination, the lights of which composed the cypher, and the name of the Prince Royal, with this device, *l'Espérance du genre humain* :—"The hope of all nations."

For

For my own part, had I been inclined to indulge personal hopes, I had great reason so to do; for my Prince always called me his *dear friend*, in his letters, and spoke frequently of the *solid* marks of friendship which he designed for me as soon as he should mount the throne.

The throne at last was mounted, while I was at Brussels, and he began his reign by sending an Ambassador Extraordinary to France; one Camas, who had lost an arm, formerly a French refugee, and then an officer in the Prussian army. He said that, as there was a Minister from the French court at Berlin, who had but one hand, he, that he might ac-

D

quit

quit himself of all obligation towards the Most Christian King, had sent him an Ambassador with only one arm.

Camas, as soon as he arrived safe at his inn, dispatched a lad to me, whom he had created his page, to tell me that he was too much fatigued to come to my house, and therefore begged I would come to him instantly, he having the finest, greatest, and most magnificent present that ever was presented, to make me on the part of the King his master. Run—run as fast as you can, said Madame du Châtelet, he has assuredly sent you the diamonds of the crown.

Away

Away I ran, and found my Ambassador, whose only baggage was a small keg of wine, tied behind his chaise, sent from the cellar of the late King by the reigning Monarch, with a royal command for me to drink. I emptied myself in protestations of astonishment and gratitude for these *liquid* marks of his Majesty's bounty, instead of the *solid* ones I had been taught to expect, and divided my keg with Camas.

My Solomon was then at Strasbourg; the whim had taken him while he was visiting his long and narrow land, which extends from Guelders to the Baltic ocean, that he would come *incognito* to

view the frontiers and troops of France. This pleasure he enjoyed at Strasbourg, where he went by the name of Count du Four, a Lord of Bohemia. His brother, the Prince Royal, who was with him, had also his travelling title; and Algaroti, who already had attached himself to him, was the only one who went unmasked.

His Majesty sent me a history of his journey to Brussels, half verse, half prose, written in a taste something similar to that of Bachaumont and Chappelle; that is to say, as similar as a King of Prussia's could be supposed to be. The following are extracts from his letter.

“ After

“ After these abominable roads, we
“ were obliged to put up at still more
“ abominable inns.

“ Hungry and cold, and late at night,

“ Each thievish host beheld our plight;

“ And each, with more than frugal fist,

“ (Stew'd first in most infernal mist)

“ Would poison us, and after rob us,

“ Happy to think how they could fob us.

“ Oh times! when robbing is so common!

“ Oh age! how wide from age of Roman!

“ Roads frightful, food bad, drink
“ worse. This was not all; we met
“ with many accidents; and to be sure
“ our equipage must have something
“ very odd about it, for every place we

“ passed through they took us for out-
“ landish animals.

“ One stares, and Monarchs us believes,

“ Others suspect we're civil thieves ;

“ Some think us late let loose from college,

“ And eager all of farther knowledge,

“ They croud and squint, and wish to smoke us,

“ As cockneys gape at hocus-pocus.

“ The master of the post-house at Kell
“ having assured us there was no safety
“ without passports, and seeing we were
“ driven to an absolute necessity of mak-
“ ing them for ourselves, or of not en-
“ tering Strasbourg, we were e'en forced
“ to this shift, in the execution of which,
“ the Prussian arms, which I had upon
“ my seal, were marvellously useful.

“ We

“ We arrived at Strasbourg, and the
“ *Corsaire de la douane* and the *Visiteur*
“ seemed satisfied with our proofs.

“ The rascals found themselves in clover,
“ With one eye read our passports over,
“ And fix’d the other on our purse,
“ Determin’d we should reimburse
“ Their pains, with guineas good and many ;
“ Thus gold, with which Jove bought Miss Danaë,
“ Thus gold, with which your mighty Cæsar
“ Govern’d the world with wond’rous ease, Sir ;
“ Gold, greater far than all the noddies,
“ Ycleped or either God or Goddes,
“ Soon brought the scoundrels to adore us,
“ And ope the gates of Strasbourg for us *.”

We

* Perhaps it is impossible to render the true spirit of these extracts, and others inserted in these Memoirs, without ap-

We may see by this letter, that he was not yet become the best of all possible poets, and that his philosophy did not look with total indifference on the metal of which his father had made such ample provision.

From Straßbourg he went to visit his territories in the Lower Germany, and sent me word he would come *incognito* to see me at Brussels. We prepared elegant apartments for him in the little Chateau de Meuse, two leagues from Cleves. He informed me, he expected
I should

pearing either stupid or extravagant; though liberties have been taken in the style, which would scarcely be justifiable in other parts of the work. T,

I should make the first advances, and accordingly I went to pay him my most profound respects.

Maupertuis, who had already formed his plan, having the mania of becoming President of an Academy upon him, had presented himself, and was lodged with Algaroti and Keizerling in one of the garrets of this palace. One foldier was the only guard I found. The Privy-Counsellor and Minister of State, Rambonet, was walking in the court-yard, blowing his fingers. He had on a pair of large, dirty, coarse ruffles, a hat all in holes, and an old judge's wig, one side of which hung into his pocket, and the other scarcely

scarcely touched his shoulder. They informed me, this man was charged with a state affair of great importance, and so indeed he was.

I was conducted into his Majesty's apartment, in which I found nothing but four bare walls. By the light of a bougie, I perceived a small truckle bed, two feet and a half wide, in a closet, upon which lay a little man, wrapped up in a morning gown of blue cloth. It was his Majesty, who lay sweating and shaking, beneath a beggarly coverlet, in a violent ague fit. I made my bow, and began my acquaintance by feeling his pulse, as if I had been his first physician.

The fit left him, and he rose, dressed himself, and sat down to table with Algaroti, Keizerling, Maupertuis, the Ambassador to the States General, and myself; where, at supper, we treated most profoundly on the immortality of the soul, natural liberty, and the *Androgynes* of Plato.

While we were thus philosophizing upon freedom, the Privy-Counsellor Rambonet, was mounted upon a post-horse, and riding all night towards Liege, at the gates of which he arrived the next day, where he proclaimed, with sound of trumpet, the name of the King his master, while two thousand soldiers from Vessel

fel were laying the city of Liege under contribution. The pretext for this fine expedition was certain rights, which his Majesty pretended to have over a part of the suburbs. It was to me he committed the task of drawing up the manifesto, which I performed as well as the nature of the case would let me; never suspecting that a King, with whom I supped, and who called me his friend, could possibly be in the wrong. The affair was soon brought to a conclusion, by the payment of a million of livres, which he exacted in good hard ducats, and which served to defray the expences of his tour to Strasbourg, concerning which he complained so loudly in his poetic prose epistle.

I soon

I soon felt myself attached to him, for he had wit, an agreeable manner, and was moreover, a King ; which is a circumstance of seduction hardly to be vanquished by human weakness. Generally speaking, it is the employment of men of letters to flatter Kings ; but in this instance, I was praised by a King, from the crown of my head to the sole of my foot, at the same time that I was libelled, at least once a week, by the Abbé Des-Fontaines, and other Grub-street poets of Paris.

Some time before the death of his father, the King of Prussia thought proper to write against the principles of Machiavel.

Machiavel. Had Machiavel had a Prince for a pupil, the very first thing he would have advised him to do, would have been so to write. The Prince Royal, however, was not master of so much finesse; he really meant what he wrote; but it was before he was a King, and while his father gave him no great reason to fall in love with despotic power. He praised moderation and justice with his whole soul; and in the ardour of his enthusiasm, looked upon all usurpation as an absolute crime.

This manuscript he had sent to me at Brussels, to have it corrected and printed; and I had already made a present of it to
a Dutch

a Dutch bookseller, one Venduren, one of the greatest knaves of his profession. I could not help feeling some remorse, at being concerned in printing this Anti-Machiavelian book, at the very moment the King of Prussia, who had a hundred millions in his coffers, was robbing the poor people at Liege of another, by the hands of the Privy-Counsellor Rambonet.

I imagined my Solomon would not stop there. His father had left him sixty-six thousand four hundred men, all complete, and excellent troops. He was busily augmenting them, and appeared to have a vast inclination to give them employment the very first opportunity.

I re-

I represented to him, that perhaps it was not altogether prudent to print his book just at the time the world might reproach him with having violated the principles he taught; and he permitted me to stop the impression. I accordingly took a journey into Holland, purposely to do him this trifling service; but the bookfeller demanded so much money, that his Majesty, who was not, in the bottom of his heart, vexed to see himself in print, was better pleased to be so for nothing, than to pay for not being so.

While I was in Holland, occupied in this business, Charles the Sixth died, in the month of October, 1740, of an indigestion,

digestion, occasioned by eating champignons, which brought on an apoplexy, and this plate of champignons changed the destiny of Europe. It was presently evident, that Frederic the third, King of Prussia, was not so great an enemy to Machiavel as the Prince Royal appeared to have been.

Although he had then conceived the project of his invasion of Silesia, he did not the less neglect to invite me to his court; but I had before given him to understand I could not come to stay with him; that I deemed it a duty to prefer friendship to ambition; that I was attached to Madame du Châtelet; and

E

that,

that, between philosophers, I loved a Lady better than a King. He approved of the liberty I took, though for his own part he did not love the Ladies. I went to pay him a visit in October; and the Cardinal de Fleury writ me a long letter, full of praises of the Anti-Machiavel, and of the author, which I did not forget to let him see.

He had already assembled his troops, yet not one of his Generals or Ministers could penetrate into his designs. The Marquis de Beauvau, who was sent to compliment him on his accession, believed he meant to declare against France, in favour of Maria-Theresa, Queen of Hungary

Hungary and Bohemia, and daughter of Charles the Sixth; and to support the election of Francis of Lorraine, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and husband of that Queen, to the Empire, supposing he might thence derive great advantages.

I had more reason than any person to suppose, the new-crowned King of Prussia meant to espouse this party; for three months before, he had sent me a political dissertation, after his manner, wherein he considered France as the natural enemy and depredator of Germany. But it was constitutional with him to do the direct contrary of what he said or wrote; not from dissimulation, but because he spoke

and wrote with one kind of enthusiasm, and afterwards acted with another.

He departed on the 15th of December, with the quartan ague, for the conquest of Silesia, at the head of thirty thousand combatants, well disciplined, and well accoutred. As he mounted his horse, he said to the Marquis de Beauvau, Maria Theresa's Minister, "I am going to play your game; should the trumps fall into our hands, we will divide the winnings."

He has since that written the history of that conquest, and he shewed me the whole of it. Here follows one of the
curious

curious paragraphs, in the introduction to these annals, which I, in preference, carefully transcribed, as a thing unique in its kind.

“ Add to the foregoing considera-
“ tions, I had troops entirely prepared
“ to act; this, the fulness of my trea-
“ sury, and the vivacity of my charac-
“ ter, were the reasons why I made war
“ upon Maria-Theresa, Queen of Bo-
“ hemia and Hungary.”

And a few lines after, he has these very words.

“ Ambition, interest, and a desire to
“ make the world speak of me, van-

“ quished all, and war was determined
“ on.”

From the time that conquerors, or fiery spirits that would be conquerors, first were, to the present hour, I believe he is the only one who has ever done himself thus much justice. Never man, perhaps, felt reason more forcibly, or listened more attentively to his passions; but this mixture of a philosophic mind, and a disorderly imagination, have ever composed his character.

It is much to be regretted that I prevailed on him to omit these passages, when I afterwards corrected his works;

a con-

a confession so uncommon, should have passed down to posterity, and have served to shew upon what motives the generality of wars are founded. We authors, poets, historians, and academicians declaimers, celebrate these fine exploits; but here is a monarch who performs and condemns them.

His troops had already entered Silesia, when his Minister at Vienna, the Baron de Gotter, made the very impolite proposal to Maria-Theresa, of ceding, with a good grace, to the Elector and King his master, three-fourths of that province: for which his Prussian Majesty

would lend her three millions of crowns, and make her husband Emperor.

Maria-Theresa, who at that time had neither troops, money, nor credit, was notwithstanding inflexible; she rather chose to risk the loss of all, than crouch to a Prince whom she looked upon as the vassal of her ancestors, and whose life the Emperor, her father, had saved. Her Generals could scarcely muster twenty thousand men. Marshal Neuperg, who commanded them, forced the King of Prussia to give battle under the walls of Neisse. The Prussian cavalry was at first put to the rout by the Austrian; and

and the King, who was not accustomed to stand fire, fled at the first shock as far as Opeleim, twelve long leagues from the field of battle.

Maupertuis, who hoped to make his fortune in a hurry, was in the suit of the Monarch this campaign, imagining that the King would at least find him a horse. But this was not the royal custom. Maupertuis bought an ass for two ducats, on the day of battle, and fled with all his might after his Majesty on ass-back. This steed, however, was presently distanced, and Maupertuis was taken and stripped by the Austrian hussars.

Frederic

Frederic passed the night on a truckle-bed, in a village alehouse near Ratibor, on the confines of Poland, whence he was preparing to enter the northern part of his own dominions, when one of his horsemen arrived from the camp at Mollwitz, and informed him he had gained the victory. This news was confirmed a quarter of an hour after by an Aid-de-Camp, and was true enough.

If the Prussian cavalry was bad, the infantry was the best in Europe; it had been under the discipline of the old Prince of Anhalt for thirty years. Marshal Schwerin, who commanded, was a pupil of Charles the Twelfth. He turned

the fate of the day as soon as the King was fled. The next day his Majesty came back to his army, and the conquering General was very near being disgraced.

I returned to philosophize in my retreat at Cirey, and passed the winter at Paris, where I had a multitude of enemies; for, having long before written the History of Charles XII. presented several successful pieces to the theatre, and composed an epic poem, I had, of course, all those who writ either in verse or prose as persecutors; and as I had the audacity to write likewise on philosophic subjects, I of necessity, according to
ancient

ancient usage, was treated as an atheist by all those who are called devotees.

I was the first who had dared develop to my countrymen, in an intelligible style, the discoveries of the great Newton. The Cartesian prejudices, which had taken place of the prejudices of the Peripatetics, were at that time so rooted in the minds of the French, that the Chancellor d'Aguesseau regarded any man whatever who should adopt discoveries made in England, as an enemy to reason and the state. He never would grant a privilege that I might have my *Elements of the Newtonian Philosophy* printed.

I was

I was likewise a vast admirer of Locke; I considered him as the sole reasonable Metaphysician. Above all, I praised that moderation so new, so prudent, and at the same time so daring, where he says, we have not sufficient knowledge to determine or affirm, by the light of reason, that God could not grant the gifts of thought and sensation to a being which we call Material.

The obstinate malignity and intrepidity of ignorance, with which they set upon me on this article, cannot be conceived. The principles of Locke had never occasioned any disputes in France before, because the Doctors read St. Thomas

Aquinas

Aquinas and Quênél, and the rest of the world read Romances. As soon as I had praised this Author, they began to cry out against both him and me. The poor creatures, who were hottest in this dispute, certainly knew very little of either matter or spirit. The fact is, we none of us know what or how we are, except that we are convinced we have motion, life, sensation, and thought, but without having the least conception of how we came by them. The very elements of matter are as much hidden from us as the rest. We are blind creatures, that walk on, groping and reasoning in the dark; and Locke was exceedingly right when he asserted, it was not
• for

for us to determine what the Almighty could or could not do.

All this, added to the success of my theatrical productions, drew a whole library of Pamphlets down upon me, in which they proved I was a bad Poet, an Atheist, and the son of a Peasant.

A history of my life was printed, in which this genealogy was inserted—An industrious German took care to collect all the tales of that kind, which had been crammed into the libels they had published against me. They imputed adventures to me with persons I never knew, and with others that never existed.

I have

I have found while writing this, a letter from the Marshal de Richelieu, which informed me of an impudent Lampoon, in which it was proved his wife had given me an elegant coach, with *something else*, at a time when he had no wife.

At first I took some pleasure in making a collection of these calumnies, but they multiplied to such a degree I was obliged to leave off. Such were the fruits I gathered from my labours: I, however, easily consoled myself; sometimes in my retreat at Cirey, and at others in mixing with the best company.

While the refuse of literature were thus making war upon me, France was
doing

doing the same upon the Queen of Hungary; and it must be owned, this war was equally unjust; for after having solemnly stipulated, guaranteed, and sworn to the Pragmatic Sanction of the Emperor Charles VI. and the succession of Maria-Teresa to the inheritance of her father, and after having received Lorraine as the purchase of these promises, it does not appear very consistent with the rights of Nations to break an engagement so sacred. The Cardinal de Fleury was persuaded out of his pacific measures; he could not say, like the King of Prussia, it was the vivacity of his temper which occasioned him to take arms. This fortunate Prelate reigned

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when

when he was eighty-six years of age, but held the reins of Government with a very feeble hand.

France was in alliance with the King of Prussia when he seized upon Silesia. Two armies were sent into Germany at a time when Maria-Teresa had none. One of these armies had penetrated to within five leagues of Vienna, without meeting a single opponent. Bohemia was given to the Elector of Bavaria, who was elected Emperor also, after having been created Lieutenant-General of the armies of the King of France. They soon, however, committed all the faults
necessary

necessary to lose the advantages they had gained.

The King of Prussia, in the mean time, having matured his courage, and gained several victories, concluded a peace with the Austrians. Maria, to her infinite regret, gave him up the county of Glatz with Silesia. Having, without ceremony, broke off his alliance with France on these conditions, in the month of June, 1742, he writ me word he had put himself under a proper regimen, and should advise the other invalids to do the like.

This Prince was then at the height of his power, having one hundred and

thirty thousand men under his command accustomed to victory, and the cavalry of which he himself had formed. He drew twice as much from Silesia as it produced to the House of Austria, saw himself firmly seated in his new conquest, and was happy, while all the other contending powers were suffering the miseries of depredation. Princes in these times ruin themselves by war—he enriched himself.

He now turned his attention to the embellishment of the city of Berlin, where he built one of the finest opera-houses in Europe, and whither he invited artists of all denominations. He
wished

wished to acquire glory of every kind, and to acquire it in the cheapest manner possible.

His father had resided at Potzdam in a vile old house; he turned it into a palace. Potzdam became a pleasant town; Berlin grew daily more extensive; and the Prussians began to taste the comforts of life, which the late King had entirely neglected. Several people had furniture in their houses, and most even wore shirts, for in the former reign such things were little known. They then wore sleeves and fore-bodies only, tied on with pack thread, and the reigning Monarch had been so educated.

The scene changed as it were by magic; Lacedæmon became Athens; deserts were peopled; and one hundred and three villages were formed from marshes cleared and drained. Nor did he neglect to make verses, and write music: I therefore was not so exceedingly wrong in calling him, The Solomon of the North. I gave him this nick name in my Letters, and he continued long to bear it.

M E M M O I R S

O F

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PART THE SECOND.

CARDINAL de Fleury died the twenty-ninth of February, 1743, at the age of ninety. Never did man come to be Prime-Minister later in life, and never did Prime-Minister keep his place so long. He began his career of good fortune at the age of seventy-three,

by being King of France; and so he continued, indisputably, to the day of his death, always affecting the greatest modesty, never amassing riches, and without pomp, forming himself only to reign. He left the reputation of an artful and amiable person, rather than that of a man of genius, and was said to have known the intrigues of a court, better than the affairs of Europe.

I have often seen him at the house of Madame de Villeroy, when he was only the ancient Bishop of the little paltry town of Frejus, of which he was always called Bishop *by divine indignation*, as may be seen in some of his letters.

Madame de Villeroi was an exceedingly ugly woman, whom he *repudiated* as soon as ever it was convenient. The Marshal de Villeroi, her husband, who knew not the Bishop had long been the lover of his lady, prevailed on Louis XIV. to name him Preceptor to Louis XV. From Preceptor he became Prime-Minister, and was not backward in contributing to the exile of his benefactor. Ingratitude excepted, he was a tolerably good man; but, as he had no talents himself, he took care to drive away all those who had, be they of what kind they would.

Several of the Academicians were desirous I should supply his place in the
French

French Academy. It was asked at the King's supper, who should pronounce the Cardinal's funeral oration at the Academy? His Majesty replied, it should be me; the Dutches of Chateauroux, his Mistress, would have it so; but the Count de Maurepas, Secretary of State, would not. He was bit with a foolish rage of quarrelling with all the Mistresses of his Master, and found the effects of his disease.

An old idiot, who was Preceptor to the Dauphin, formerly a Theatine Monk, and afterwards Bishop of Mirepoix, named Boyer, undertook, for conscience-sake, to second the caprice of M.
de

de Maurepas. This Boyer having the disposal of the church livings, the King left all the affairs of the Clergy to his management. This, in his opinion, came under the head of ecclesiastical matters ; and he remonstrated that it would be an offence against God, should a profane person, like me, succeed a Cardinal.

I knew that M. de Maurepas instigated him to act thus ; I therefore went to this Minister, and told him, that though the honour of being an Academician was not a very important dignity, yet, after having been appointed, it was a disagreeable thing to be excluded. You are upon ill terms with the Dutchess de
Chateau-

Chateauroux, with whom his Majesty is in love, and likewise with the Duke de Richelieu, by whom she is governed; but pray, my Lord, what connexion is there between these disputes of your's, and a poor feat in the French Academy? I conjure you to tell me sincerely, in case Madame de Chateauroux can vanquish the Bishop de Mirepoix in this contest, will you remain neuter?—He seemed to collect himself for a moment, and then replied, “No; I shall crush
“you.”

The Priest at length conquered the Mistress, and I lost my feat in the Academy, which did not give me much vexation;

ation; but I love to recollect this adventure; it depicts so truly the little arts of those whom we call *the Great*, and shews how really trifles are often considered by them as very important matters.

Public affairs, however, went on no better, since the death of the Cardinal, than they had done during the two last years of his life. The House of Austria rose from its ashes into new life; France was pressed hard by her and by England; and we had no resource left but in the King of Prussia, who had led us into this war, and who abandoned us in our necessity. They conceived the design of
sending

sending secretly to sound the intentions of this Monarch, and try if he was not in a humour to prevent the storm, which, soon or late, must gather at Vienna, and fall upon him, after having visited us; to see therefore if he would not lend us a hundred thousand men on this occasion, and thus fix himself more firmly in the Silesian conquest.

The Duke de Richelieu, and the Dutches de Chateauroux first imagined this scheme, the King adopted it, and M. Amelot, Minister for Foreign Affairs, but in a very subaltern situation, was singly charged to hasten my departure. A pretext was wanted, and I

4 seized

seized that of my dispute with the old Bishop of Mirepoix, which met with his Majesty's approbation. I writ to the King of Prussia, that I could no longer endure the persecutions of this Theatine Monk; and that I must take refuge with a King, who was a philosopher, to escape the snare of a Bishop, who was a bigot. This Prelate always signed himself *l'anc*, instead of *l'ancien*, [the ancient] Bishop of Mirepoix; and his writing being very bad, we used continually to read and call him the ass of Mirepoix. It was a subject of pleasantry, and never was negociation more gay.

The

The King of Prussia, who struck not with a palsied hand, when the blow was intended for the cheek of a Monk, or a Prelate become courtier, replied with a deluge of sarcasms upon the ass of Mirepoix, and pressed me to come.

I took great care, that both my letters and these answers should be read. It soon came to the Bishop's ears, and he went to complain to his Majesty, that he was laughed at for a fool in a foreign court.

The King's answer was, it was a matter agreed on, and he must let it pass without notice.

This

This answer has very little of the character of Louis XV. in it; and, as coming from him, always appeared to me extraordinary. Thus I had, at once, the pleasure of revenging myself upon a Bishop, who had excluded me from the Academy, of taking a very agreeable journey, and of having an opportunity to exert myself in the service of the King and State. Even the Count de Maurepas entered into this project with warmth, because at that time he governed M. Amelot, and considered himself, in fact, as the Minister for foreign affairs.

The most singular part of this business was, that we were obliged to let Madame

du Châtelet into the secret. There was not, in her opinion, any thing in the world so unmanly, so abominable, as for a man to leave a woman to go and live with a King; and she would have made a most dreadful tumult, had they not agreed, that to appease her, she should be informed of the reason, and that the letters should all pass through her hands.

Whatever money I wanted for my journey, was given, upon my mere receipt, by M. de Monmartel, which power I took care not to abuse. I staid some time in Holland, while the King of Prussia was galloping, from one end of his territories to the other, to be present at reviews,

reviews, and my stay at the Hague was not useless. I had apartments in the Palace *de la Vieille Cour*, which belonged at that time to the King of Prussia, in participation with the House of Orange. His Envoy, the young Count de Padvitz, loved, and was beloved by the lady of one of the principal persons among their High Mightinesses ; and he obtained, from her, copies of all their secret resolutions, which, at that time, were very prejudicial to the interests of France. These copies I sent to our Court, and my service was found very acceptable.

When I came to Berlin, his Majesty would lodge me in the Palace, as he had

done on my former visits. He led, at Potzdam, the life he had always led since his advancement to the Throne: the manner of it deserves a description.

He rose at five in summer, and six in winter. If you wish to know the royal ceremonies, what they were on great, and what on common occasions, the functions of his high Almoner, his great Chamberlain, the first Gentleman of his Bed-chamber, and his Gentlemen Ushers, I answer, a single lacquey came to light his fire, dress, and shave him, though he partly dressed himself alone. His chamber was rather beautiful; a rich balustrade of silver, ornamented with little loves,

loves, of exceedingly good sculpture, seemed to form the alcove of the state-bed, the curtains of which were seen ; but behind these curtains, instead of a bed there was a library ; and as to the royal bed, it was composed of a stump bedstead without facking, but cross corded, and a slight mattress, the whole concealed by a screen. Marcus Aurelius and Julian, the two greatest men among the Romans, and Apostles of the Stoics, lay not on a harder couch.

As soon as his Majesty was dressed and booted, Stoicism, for a few moments, gave place to Epicurism. Two or three of his favourites entered : these were

either Lieutenants, Ensigns, Pages, Hei-
duques, or young Cadets. Coffee was
brought in, and he to whom the hand-
kerchief was thrown, remained ten mi-
nutes tête-à-tête with his Majesty.
Things were not carried to the last ex-
tremity, because, while Prince, in his fa-
ther's life-time, he had been very ill
treated for, and effectually cured of love,
in his amours *de passade* *. He could not
play principal, and was obliged to con-
tent himself with the second.

These school-boy sports being over,
the state affairs next were considered,
and his first Minister came with a large
bundle of papers under his arm. This

* Of once and away.

first Minister was a Clerk, who lodged up two-pair-of-stairs in the house of Fridendorff, and was the soldier, now valet de chambre and favourite, who had formerly served the King at Custrin. The Secretaries of State sent all the dispatches to the King's Clerk, who brought extracts to his Majesty, and the King writ his answer in the margin in two words. The whole affairs of the Kingdom were thus expedited in an hour, and seldom did the Secretaries of State, or the Ministers in office, come into his presence; nay, there were some to whom even he had never spoken. The King, his father, had put the finances under such exact regulations, all was executed in such a military manner,

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manner, and obedience was so blind, that four hundred leagues were governed with as much ease as a manor.

About eleven o'clock, the King, booted, reviewed in his garden his regiment of guards; and at the same hour all the Colonels did the like throughout the provinces, in the interval of parade and dinner-time. The Princes his brothers, the General Officers, and one or two of his Chamberlains, eat at his table, which was as well furnished as could be expected in a country where they had neither game, tolerable butcher's meat, nor poultry, and where they got all their wheat from Magdebourg.

When

When dinner was over he retired to his cabinet, and writ verses till five or six o'clock; a young man of the name of Darget, formerly Secretary to M. de Valory, the French Envoy, then came and read to him. At seven he had a little concert, at which he played the flute, and as well as the best performers. His own compositions were often among the pieces played, for there was no art he did not cultivate; and had he lived among the Greeks, he would not, like Epaminondas, have had the mortification to confess he did not understand music.

They supped in a little hall, the most singular ornament of which was a picture,
the

the design of which he himself gave to Pene, his painter, and one of our best colourists. The subject was totally Priapian. Turtles billing, young men in the embraces of young women, nymphs beneath satyrs, cupids at lascivious sports, people fainting with desire at beholding them, and rams and goats at similar pastimes. The supper was frequently seasoned with the same kind of philosophy; and any person who had heard the discourse, and looked at this picture, would have supposed they had caught the Seven Sages of Greece in a brothel.

Never was there a place in the world where liberty of speech was so fully indulged,

dulged, or where the various superstitions of men, were treated with so great a degree of pleasantry and contempt. God was respected, but those who in his name had imposed upon credulity, were not spared. Neither women nor priests ever entered the palace; and, in a word, Frederic lived without religion, without a council, and without a court.

Some of the provincial Judges were about to burn a poor devil of a Peasant, accused of an intrigue of a shocking nature. No person, however, is executed in the Prussian dominions, till Frederic has confirmed the sentence; a most humane law, practised likewise in England,
and

and other countries. The King wrote at the bottom of the sentence, that free liberty of opinion, and of * * * * * were allowed throughout his Territories.

A Minister, near Stettin, thought this indulgence exceedingly scandalous, and let fall some expressions, in a sermon upon Herod, which glanced at the King; he was therefore summoned to appear before the Consistory at Potzdam, though, in fact, there was no more a Consistory at Court than there was a Mass. The poor man came. The King put on a band and surplice. M. d'Argens, Author of the Jewish Letters, and one Baron de Polnitz, who had changed his religion three
or

or four times, dressed themselves up in the same manner. A folio volume of Bayle's Dictionary was placed upon the table by way of a Bible, and the culprit was introduced by two grenadiers, and set before these three Ministers of the Gospel.

My brother, said the King, I demand, in the name of the Most High God, who the Herod was, concerning whom you preached? He who slew the children, replied the simple Priest. But was this Herod the first? said the King; for you ought to know there have been several Herods. The Priest was silent; he could not answer this question. How! continued

tinued the King, have you dared to preach about Herod, and are ignorant both of him and his family? You are unworthy of the holy ministry. We shall pardon you for this time, but know we shall excommunicate you if ever you dare hereafter preach against any one whom you do not know.

They then delivered his sentence and pardon to him, signed by three ridiculous names invented on purpose. We shall go to-morrow to Berlin, added the King, and we will demand forgiveness for you of our brotherhood. Do not fail to come and find us out. Accordingly the Priest went, and enquired for these three labourers

labourers in the gospel vineyard all over Berlin, where he was laughed at; but the King, who had more humour than liberality, forgot to reimburse him for the expences of his journey.

Frederic governed the church with as much despotism as the state. He pronounced the divorces himself when husband and wife wanted to pair themselves differently. A Minister one day cited the Old Testament on the subject of divorces, and the King told him, Moses managed the Jews just as he pleased; as for me, I must govern my Prussians to the best of my abilities.

This

This singularity of government, these manners still more singular, this contrast of Stoicism and Epicurianism, of severity in military discipline, and effeminacy in the interior of the palace, of Pages with whom he amused himself in his closet, and of Soldiers who ran the gauntlet six and thirty times, while the monarch beheld them through his window, under which the punishment was inflicted, of reasoning on ethics, and of unbridled licentiousness, formed, altogether, a heterogeneous picture, which, till then, few had known, and which has since spread through Europe.

The

The greatest œconomy of every kind was observed at Potzdam; the King's table, and that of his officers and domestics, were regulated at thirty-three crowns (about four guineas) a day, exclusive of wine. Instead of the Officers of the Crown taking charge of this expence, as at other courts, it was his valet de chambre Fridesdorff, who was at once his High Steward, Great Cup-bearer, and First Pantler.

Whether it was from policy or œconomy, I know not, but he never granted the least kindness to any of his former favourites, especially to those who had risked their lives for him when he was

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Prince

Prince Royal. He did not even pay the money he borrowed at that time. Like as Louis XII. would not revenge the affronts of the Duke d'Orleans, neither would the King of Prussia remember the debts of the Prince Royal.

His poor mistress, who had suffered whipping for his sake by the hands of the common hangman, was married at Berlin to the Clerk of the Hackney-Coach-office, for they had eighteen hackney coaches at Berlin; and her royal lover allowed her a pension of seventy crowns (eight pounds fifteen shillings) a year. She called herself Mademoiselle Saumers, and was a tall, meagre

meagre figure, very like one of the Sybils, without the least appearance of meriting to be publicly whipped for a Prince.

When, however, he was at Berlin, he made a great display of magnificence on public days. It was a superb spectacle for the vain, that is to say, for almost all mankind, to see him at table, surrounded with twenty Princes of the Empire, served in vessels of gold, the richest in Europe, by two and thirty Pages, and as many young Heiduques, all splendidly cloathed, and bearing dishes of massy gold. The State Officers

were also employed on these occasions, though unknown at any other time.

After dinner they went to the Opera at the large Theatre, three hundred feet long, which had been built without an Architect by one of his Chamberlains, whose name was Knoberstoff. The finest voices and best dancers were engaged in his service. Barberini at that time danced at his Theatre, the same who has since been married to the son of his Chancellor. The King had her carried off by his foldiers from Venice, and brought even through Vienna as far as Berlin. He was a little in love with her, because

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she

she had legs like a man; but the thing most of all incomprehensible, was, that he gave her a salary of thirty-two thousand livres (above thirteen hundred pounds.) His Italian Poet, who was obliged to put the operas into verse, of which the King himself gave the plan, had little more than a thirtieth part of this sum; but it ought to be remembered, he was very ugly, and could not dance. In a word, Barberini touched for her share more than any three of his Ministers of State together.

As for the Italian Poet, he one day took care to pay himself with his own hands, for he stript off the gold from the

ornaments in an old chapel of the first King of Prussia's; on which occasion Frederic remarked, that as he never went to the chapel he had lost nothing. Besides, he had lately written a dissertation in favour of thieves, which is printed in the collections of his academy; and he did not think proper this time to contradict his writings by his actions.

This indulgence was not extended to any military being. There was an old gentleman of Franche Comté, confined in the prison of Spandau, who was six feet high, and whom the late King for that reason had inveigled into Prussia. They promised him the place of Chamberlain,

berlain, and gave him that of foot foldier. This poor man soon after deserted with one of his comrades, but was taken and brought before the late King. He had the simplicity to tell him, he repented of nothing but that he had not stabbed such a tyrant ; and for this answer he had his nose and ears cut off, ran the gauntlet six and thirty times, and was afterwards sent to wheel the barrow at Spandau. He continued this employment to the very time that M. de Valory, our Envoy, pressed me to beg remission for him of the most *clement* son of the most iron-hearted Frederic-William.

His Majesty had been pleased to say, it was to oblige me that he had got up an Opera, full of poetical beauties, and written by the celebrated Metestasio, called *La Clemenza di Tito*. The King, with the assistance of his composer, had set it to music himself. I took this opportunity to recommend the poor old Frenchman, without nose and ears, to his bounty, which I did in the following admonitory verses.

What! can it be when mighty Frederic reigns
That wretches groan? Oh! Genius universal,
Soul firm, yet feeling, deign to end the culprit's
Torments; cease not your generous cares for
Misery:

Lo!

Lo! at your feet, where Pity, daughter of
Repentance, mistress of great minds, kneels
trembling;

Astonish'd to find her tears shed in vain,
On the hand that has driven Sorrow from the
Earth.

Wherefore display with such magnificence
The triumphs of great Titus? Imitate
Him every way, or vaunt of him no more.

The request was something daring,
but one may say what one will poeti-
cally. His Majesty promised remission,
and some months after even had the
bounty to send the poor gentleman in
question to the Hospital, at three pence
a day, which favour he had refused to
the

the Queen, his mother; but she, in all probability, had asked only in prose.

In the midst of all these feasts, operas, and suppers, my secret negociation went forward; the King was willing I should speak on every thing, and I frequently took occasion to intermix questions concerning France and Austria with the Eneid and Roman History. The conversation was sometimes animated; the King became warm, and would tell me, that while our Court was knocking at every door to procure peace, he should not think it adviseable to go to war in our defence. I sent my reflexions upon
paper,

paper, left half blank, from my apartment to his; and he answered my daring remarks in the margin. I have this paper still, in which I have said,

Can it be doubted that the House of Austria will seize the very first opportunity to redemand Silesia? To which he answered in the margin

Ils seront reçûs, biribi,

A la façon de Barbari,

Mon ami.

Then they received, my friend, shall be

After the mode of Barbary.

This new kind of negociation finished by a discourse, in which, in one of his
moments

moments of vivacity, he made me against the King of England, his dear Uncle. These two Kings did not love one another. My Prussian Monarch told me, “George was the Uncle of Frederic, but not of the King of Prussia;” and he ended by saying, “Let France declare war against England, and I will march,”

This was all I wanted. I returned instantly to France, and gave an account of my journey; with such hopes to the French Ministry as had been given me at Berlin. Neither were they false, for the spring following the King of Prussia concluded a new treaty with France, and advanced into Bohemia with a hundred thousand

thousand men, while the Austrians were in Alfatia.

Had I related my adventure to any good Parisian, with the service I had done the state, he would not have made the least doubt of my having been promised an excellent place. I will tell you what was my recompense. The Dutchesse de Chateauroux was vexed the negotiation had not been brought about entirely by her means ; she had likewise an inclination to have M. Amelot turned out because he stuttered, which trifling defect she found offensive, and she farther hated him because he was governed by M. de Maurepas ; he was accordingly dis-

dismissed eight days after, and I was included in his disgrace.

It happened some time after this, that Louis XV. fell extremely ill at the City of Metz. This was the time for M. de Maurepas and his cabal to ruin the Dutcheſs de Chateauroux. The Biſhop of Soiſſons, Fitz-James, ſon of the baſtard of James II. who was thought a ſaint, would, in quality of Grand Almoner, convert the King; and declared he would neither grant him abſolution, nor ſuffer him to communicate, if he did not drive his Miſtreſs, with her Siſter the Dutcheſs of Lauragais, and their friends from court; and the two Siſters in confe-
quence

quence departed, with the execrations of the people of Metz.

This action of Louis XV. was the occasion that the Parisians, equally stupid with the good folks of Metz, gave him the surname of BIEN-AIMÉ, *Well-beloved*. A fellow named Vadé first invented this title, which all the Almanacs echoed. As soon as the Prince recovered, he desired only to be the well-beloved of his Mistress, for whom he found his affection increase ; and she was again going to undertake her Ministry, when she died suddenly, in consequence of the passions into which she had been thrown

thrown by her dismissal. She was presently forgot.

A Mistress was now wanted, and the choice fell upon the Demoiselle Poisson. She was the daughter of a kept woman and a countryman, who lived at La Ferté-sous-Jouarre, and who had amassed some money by selling wheat to the Cornfactors. This poor man at that time had absconded, having been condemned for malversation, and they had married his daughter to the under Farmer-general le Normand, Lord of Etiole, and Nephew of the Farmer-general le Normand, of Tourneham, who kept her mother. The daughter had been well educated, was prudent, amiable,

miable, very graceful, had great talents, a fine understanding, and a good heart.

I was tolerably intimate with her, and was even the confidant of her amours. She confessed to me, she had always had a secret fore-thought that the King would fall in love with her, and that she had always ardently wished he might, without making her wishes too apparent. This idea, which seems so chimerical for a person in her station, originated from her having been often taken to the royal hunt in the forest of Senar. Tourneghem, her mother's lover, had a country-house near there, and used to take her out to air in a neat Calash. His Ma-

jeſty had obſerved her, and had often ſent her veniſon. Her mother never ceaſed telling her ſhe was handſomer than Madame de Chateauroux, and the good man Tourneham confirmed it in raptures. It muſt be owned, the daughter of Madame Poifſon was a morſel for Maſteſty. After ſhe was certain of her Royal Lover, ſhe told me ſhe was firmly perſuaded of the doctrine of predeſtination, and ſhe had ſome cauſe ſo to be. I paſſed ſeveral months with her at Etiole, while the King made the campaign of 1746.

I hence obtained rewards which had never been granted to my works or my ſervices.

services. I was deemed worthy to be one of the forty *useless* Members of the Academy, was appointed Historiographer of France, and created by the King one of the Gentlemen in Ordinary of his Chamber. From this I concluded it was better, in order to make the most trifling fortune, to speak four words to a King's mistress, than to write a hundred volumes.

As soon as I had the appearance of a fortunate man, the whole brotherhood of the Beaux-Esprits of Paris was let loose upon me, with all the inveterate animosity which might be expected from them, against a person who obtained

those benefactions which they imagined only due to their own merits.

My connexion with Madame du Châtelet was never interrupted; our friendship, and our love of literature, were unalterable; we lived together both in town and out of town. Cirey is situated upon the borders of Lorraine, and King Stanislaus at that time kept his little agreeable court at Luneville. Old and fanatic as he was, he yet had a friendship with a lady who was neither. His affections were divided between Madame la Marquise de Boufflers, and a Jesuit, whose name was Menou; a Priest, the most

most daring, the most intriguing I have ever known.

This man had drawn from King Stanislaus, by means of his Queen, whom he had governed, about a million of livres, near forty-two thousand pounds, part of which were employed in building a magnificent house for himself and some Jesuits of Nancy. This house was endowed with twenty-four thousand livres, or a thousand pounds a year; half of which supplied his table, and the other half was to give away to whom he pleased. The King's mistress* was not
by

* Omit the word Mistress, it is false, and insert Friend. The Marchioness de Boufflers was

by any means so well treated; she scarcely could get from his Polish Majesty wherewith to buy her petticoats; and yet the Jesuit envied what she had, and was violently jealous of her power. They were at open war *, and the poor King had a most disinterested friend, and seldom used her interest but in the service of her friends; and the expression, *wherewith to buy her petticoats*, is not at all applicable.

* Madame de Boufflers never was at variance with Father Menou, who, all-intriguing as he was, never thought of giving Stanislaus Madame du Châtelet for a mistress. That lady, and M. de Voltaire, never were at Luneville, except when invited by M^e. de B***, whom they of-

had enough to do every day when he came from mass to reconcile his mistress and his confessor. Our Jesuit at last having heard of Madame du Châtelet, who was exceedingly well shaped, and still tolerably handsome, conceived the project of substituting her to Madame de Boufflers.

Stanislaus amused himself sometimes in writing little works, which were bad ten visited, and found very amiable; they never went as to the King of Poland. If Menou really proposed the journey to Voltaire and Madame du Châtelet, it was when he was informed they were coming, and to make a merit of it with the King.

The two last notes are by M. de St. Lambert, author of a Poem on the Seasons.

enough, and Menou imagined an authorefs would fucceed with him as a miftrefs better than any other. With this fine trick in his head he came to Cirey, cajoled Madame du Châtelet, and told us how delighted King Stanislaus would be in our company. He then returned to the King, and informed him how ardently we defired to come and pay our court to his Majesty. Stanislaus asked Madame de Boufflers to bring us; and we went to pafs the whole year, 1749, at Luneville. But the projects of the holy Jefuit did not fucceed; the very reverfe took place; we were devoted to Madame de Boufflers, and he

had

had two women to combat instead of one.

The life led at the court of Lorraine was tolerably agreeable; though there, as in other courts, there were plenty of intrigues and artifice.

Towards the end of the year, Poncet, Bishop of Troyes, who was overwhelmed with debts, and whose reputation was lost, wished to come and augment our intrigues and artifice.

When I say he had lost his reputation, I mean also the reputation of his sermons and funeral orations. He obtained,

tained, through the interest of our two ladies, the place of Grand-Almoner to the King, who was flattered by having a Bishop in his pay, and at very small wages too. This Prelate did not come till 1750: he began his career by intriguing against Madame de Boufflers, his benefactress, and was dismissed. His anger alighted on Lewis XV. the son-in-law of Stanislaus: being returned to Troyes, he would needs play a part in the ridiculous farce of the confessional billets, invented by Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris: he made head against the parliament, and braved the King. This was not the way to pay his debts, but to get himself imprisoned. Louis
sent

sent him into Alfatia, and had him shut up in a convent of fat German Friars.

But I must return to what concerns myself. Madame du Châtelet died in the palace of Stanislaus, after two days illness; and we were so affected, that not one of us ever remembered to send for Priest, Jesuit, or any of the Seven Sacraments. It was we, and not Madame du Châtelet, who felt the horrors of death. The good King Stanislaus came to my chamber, and mixed his tears with mine: few of his brethren would have done so much on a like occasion. He wished me to stay at Lunéville,

ville, but I could no longer support the place, and returned to Paris.

It was my destiny to run from King to King, although I loved liberty even to idolatry. The King of Prussia, whom I had frequently given to understand I would never quit Madame du Châtelet for him, would absolutely entrap me, now he was rid of his rival. He enjoyed at that time a peace, which he had purchased with victory; and his leisure hours were always devoted to making verses, or writing the history of his country and campaigns. He was well convinced, that in reality his verse and prose too, were superior to my verse
and

and prose, as to their essence ; though as to the form, he thought there was a certain something, a turn, that I, in quality of Academician, might give to his writings ; and there was no kind of flattery, no seduction, he did not employ to engage me to come.

Who might resist a Monarch, a Hero, a Poet, a Musician, a Philosopher, who pretended too to love me, and whom I thought I also loved. I set out once more for Potzdam, in the month of June, 1750. Astolphus did not meet a kinder reception in the palace of Alcina. To be lodged in the same apartments that Marshal Saxe had occupied ; to have the
royal

royal cooks at my command, when I chose to dine alone; and the royal coachmen, when I had an inclination to ride, were trifling favours.

Our suppers were very agreeable. I know not if I am deceived, but I think we had a deal of wit. The King was witty, and gave occasion to wit in others; and what is still more extraordinary, I never found myself so much at my ease. I worked two hours a day with his Majesty, corrected his works, and never failed highly to praise whatever was worthy of praise, although I rejected the dross. I gave him details of all that was necessary in rhetoric and criticism,

for his use; he profited by my advice, and his genius assisted him more effectually than my lessons.

I had no court to make, no visits to pay, no duty to fulfil; I led the life of liberty, and had no conception of any thing more happy than my then situation. My Frederic-Alcina, who saw my brain was already a little disordered, redoubled the potions that I might be totally inebriated. The last seduction was a letter he wrote, and sent from his apartments to mine. A Mistress could not have written more tenderly; he laboured in his epistle to dissipate the fear which his rank and character had inspired:

ed: It contained these remarkable words:

“ How is it possible I should bring
“ unhappiness on the man I esteem, who
“ has sacrificed his country, and all that
“ humanity holds dear, to me? I respect
“ you as my Master, and love you as
“ my friend. What slavery, what mis-
“ fortune, what change can be feared,
“ in a place where you are esteemed as
“ much as in your own country, and
“ with a friend who has a grateful heart?
“ I respected the friendship that endear-
“ ed you to Madame du Châtelet, but
“ after her I am one of your oldest
“ friends. I give you my promise you
“ shall

“ shall be happy here as long as I
“ live.”

Here is a letter, such as few of *their*
Majesties write: It was the finishing glass
to compleat my drunkenness. His
wordy protestations were still stronger
than his written ones. He was accus-
tomed to very singular demonstrations of
tendernefs to younger favourites than
I, and forgetting for a moment I was
not of their age, and had not a fine
hand, he seized it and imprinted a kiss;
I took his, returned his salute, and
signed myself his slave.

It was necessary I should get permission from the King of France to belong to two Masters: The King of Prussia took charge of every thing, and wrote to ask me of Louis. I never imagined they were shocked at Versailles, that a Gentleman in Ordinary of the Chamber, one of the most useless Beings of a Court, should become a useless Chamberlain at Berlin. They granted me full permission, but were highly piqued, and did not pardon me. I greatly displeased the King of France without pleasing the King of Prussia, who laughed at me in the bottom of his heart.

Behold

Behold me then with a silver key gilt with gold hanging at my button-hole, a cross round my neck, and twenty thousand livres, or eight hundred guineas a year. Maupertuis fell sick, and yet I did not perceive the occasion.

At that time there was a Physician at Berlin, one La Metrie, who was the most frank and declared Atheist of all the medical people of Europe. He was a gay, pleasant, thoughtless fellow, who knew the theory of physic as well as the best of his brethren, but without contradiction the worst practitioner upon earth, for which reason he had left the profession. He ridiculed the whole faculty

of Paris, and had even written many personalities against individuals, which they could not pardon; and they obtained a decree against him, by which a reward was offered for his apprehension.

La Metrie had, in consequence, fled to Berlin, where he amused himself sufficiently by his gaiety, and likewise by writing and printing all that can be imagined most impudent upon manners; his books pleased the King, who made him, not his Physician, but, his Reader.

One day after the lecture, La Metrie, who spoke whatever came uppermost, told his Majesty there were persons
exceed-

exceedingly jealous of my favour and fortune.—*Be quiet awhile*, said Frederic, *we squeeze the orange, and throw it away when we have swallowed the juice.*—La Metrie did not forget to repeat to me this fine apophthegm, worthy Dionysius of Syracuse. From that time I determined to take all possible care of the orange-peel. I had about twelve thousand guineas to place out at interest, but was determined it should not be in the territories of my Alcina. I found an advantageous opportunity of lending them upon the estates which the Duke of Wurtemberg possessed in France.

The King, who opened all my letters, did not doubt of my intention to quit his court. The furor of rhiming, however, still possessing him, as it did Dionysius, I was obliged continually to pore, and again revise his History of Brandenburg, and all the rest of his works.

La Metrie died from having eaten a pasty stuffed with truffles, after a very hearty dinner at the table of Lord Tyrconnel, Envoy from France. It was pretended he had been confessed before his death. The King was exceedingly vexed at this, and took care to be exactly informed concerning the truth of

the assertion; they assured him it was an atrocious calumny, for La Metrie had died as he lived, abjuring God and Physicians. His Majesty was convinced, and immediately composed his funeral oration, which was read, in his name, at a public sitting of the Academy, by Darget his Secretary. He settled five-and-twenty pounds a year likewise upon a girl of the town, whom La Metrie had brought from Paris, where he had left his wife and children.

Maupertuis, who knew the anecdote of the orange-peel, took an opportunity to spread a report, that I had said, the place of King's Atheist was vacant.

This calumny did not succeed; but he afterwards added I had also said, the King's poetry was bad; and this answered his purpose.

From this time forward, I found the King's suppers were no longer so merry; I had fewer verses to correct, and my disgrace was complete.

Algaroti, Darget, and a Frenchman, whose name was Chasol, one of the King's best Officers, left him all at once. I was preparing to do the same, but I wished, before I went, to enjoy the pleasure of laughing at a book Maupertuis had just printed. It was the best of opportunities,

portunities, for never had any thing appeared so ridiculous or absurd. The good man seriously proposed to travel directly to the two Poles; to dissect the heads of giants, and discover the nature of the soul by the texture of the brain; to build a city, and make the inhabitants all speak Latin; to sink a pit to the center of the earth; to cure the sick, by plaistering them over with gum-resin; and, finally, to prophesy, by enthusiastically inflating the fancy.

The King laughed, I laughed, every body laughed at his book; but there was a scene acting at that time of a far more serious nature, concerning I know not
what

what mathematical nonsense that Maupertuis wanted to establish as discoveries. A more learned Mathematician, Koëning, Librarian to the Princess of Orange at the Hague, shewed him his mistake, and that Leibnitz, who had before time examined that old idea, had demonstrated its falsity in several of his letters, copies of which he sent Maupertuis.

Maupertuis, President of the Academy at Berlin, enraged that an associate and a stranger should prove his blunders, took care first to persuade the King, that Koëning, being settled in Holland, was of course his enemy ; and next, that he had said many disrespectful things of his Majesty's

jeſty's verſe and proſe to the Princeſs of Orange.

This precaution taken, he ſuborned ſome few poor penſioners of the Academy, his dependents, had Koëning condemned as a forger, and his name eraſed from the number of Academicians. Here however he was anticipated, for Koëning had ſent back his Patent-Academician-Dignity to Berlin.

All the men of letters in Europe were as full of indignation at the manœuvres of Maupertuis as they were weary of his book, and he obtained the contempt and hatred even of thoſe who did not underſtand

stand the dispute. They were obliged to content themselves at Berlin with a mere shrug of the shoulders; for the King having taken a part in this unfortunate affair, no person durst speak. I was the only one who spoke out. Koë-nig was my friend; and I had at once the satisfaction to defend the liberty of the learned, the cause of a friend, and of mortifying an enemy, who was as much the enemy of moderation as of me.

I had no intention to stay at Berlin; I had always preferred liberty to every thing; few men of letters have a proper sense of it; most of them are poor; poverty enervates, and even philoso-
phers,

phers, at court, become as truly slaves as the first Officer of the Crown. I felt how displeasing my free spirit must be to a King more absolute than the Grand Turk. He was a pleasant Monarch, in the recesses of his palace, we must confess: he protected Maupertuis, and laughed at him more than any one. He writ against him, and sent his manuscript to my chamber by one Marvitz, a Minister of his secret pleasures; he turned to ridicule the Pit to the center of the earth, the method of cure with Plaister of gum-resin, the voyage to the South Pole, the Latin city, and the cowardice of the Academy, in having suffered the tyranny exercised upon poor Koëmig. But his motto

motto was, *No clamour when I don't cry*; and he had every thing burnt that had been written upon the controverfy, except his own work.

I fent him back his order, his Chamberlain's key, and his penfion; he then did every thing in his power to make me ftay, and I every thing in my power to depart. He again gave me his crofs and his key, and would have me to fup with him; I therefore once more fupped like Democles, after which I parted with a promife to return, but with a firm defign never to fee him more.

Thus

Thus there were four of us who had escaped in a short time, Chasol, Darget, Algaroti, and I; in fact, there was no such thing as staying. It is well known how much must be borne from Kings, but Frederic was too free in the abuse of his prerogative. All society has its laws, except the society of the Lion and the Lamb. Frederic continually failed in the first of these laws; which is, to say nothing disobliging of any of the company. He often used to ask his Chamberlain Polnitz, if he would not willingly change his religion a fourth time, and offer to pay a hundred crowns down for his conversion. “ Good God, my dear Pol-

“ nitz,

“nitz, he would say, I have forgot the
“name of that person at the Hague,
“whom you cheated by selling him base
“for pure silver; let me beg of you to
“assist my memory a little.” He treated
poor d’Argens in much the same way;
and yet these two victims remained. Pol-
nitz having wasted his fortune, was obliged
to swallow serpents for bread, and had
no other food; and d’Argens had no
property in the world, but his Jewish
Letters, and his wife, called Cochois, a
bad provincial actress, and so ugly she
could get no employment at any trade,
though she practised several. As for
Maupertuis, who had been silly enough
to

to place out his money at Berlin, and not thinking a hundred pistoles better in a free country than a thousand in a despotic one, he had no choice but to wear the fetters which himself had forged.

L

M E-

M E M O I R S

O F

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PART THE THIRD.

LEAVING my palace of Alcina,
 I went to pass a month with the
 Dutcheſs of Saxe-Gotha, the beſt of
 Princeſſes, full of gentleneſs, diſcretion,
 and equanimity, and who, God be thank-
 ed, did not make verſes. After that I
 ſpent a few days at the country-houſe of
 the

the Landgrave of Hesse, who was still a remove farther from poetry than the Princess of Gotha. Thus I took breath, and thence continued, by short journies, my route to Franckfort, where a very odd kind of destiny was in reserve for me.

I fell ill at Franckfort, and one of my neices, the widow of a Captain who had belonged to the regiment of Champagne, a most amiable woman, with excellent talents, and who, moreover, was esteemed at Paris as belonging to the Order of Good Company, had the courage to quit that city, and come to me on the Maine, where she found me a prisoner of war.

This fine adventure happened thus: One Freitag, who had been banished Dresden, after having been put in chains and condemned to the wheel-barrow, became afterwards an agent to the King of Prussia, who was glad to be served by such-like Ministers, because they asked no wages but what they could steal from travellers.

This Ambassador, and one Schmitt, a tradesman, formerly condemned and punished for coining, signified to me, on the part of his Majesty the King of Prussia, that I must not depart from Franckfort, till I had given back the precious effects I had carried off from his Majesty.

Majesty. “ My very good Messieurs,
“ (said I,) I have brought nothing out
“ of that country, I can assure you, not
“ even the least regret ; what, then, are
“ these famous jewels of the crown of
“ Brandenburg, that you thus re-de-
“ mand?”—“ *Dat it be, Montseer, (an-*
“ *swered Freitag) ouf dey wurks ouf po-*
“ *esy ouf de King mine master.*”—“ Oh!
“ (answered I,) with all my heart ; he
“ shall have his works in verse and
“ prose, though I have more titles to
“ them than one, for he made me a
“ present of a fine copy, printed at his
“ own expence ; but, unfortunately for
“ me, this printed copy is at Leipfic,
“ with my other effects.”

Freitag then proposed that I should stay at Franckfort till this treasure arrived from Leipfic, and signed the following curious quittance:

Montseer, so soon as shawl dey great pack come ouf Leipfic, mit de vurks ouf poesy be given mit me, you shawl go ouf vere you do please. Given at Franckfort de vurst of June, 1753.—Freitag, Resident ouf de King mine master.

At the bottom of which I signed,—
*Good, vor dey vurks ouf poesy ouf de King your master:—*With which the Resident was well satisfied.

On

On the twelfth of June the great *pack* of poesy came, and I faithfully remitted the sacred deposit, imagining I might then depart, without offence to any crowned head; but at the very instant when we were setting off, I, my Secretary, my servants, and even my niece, were arrested. Four soldiers dragged us through the midst of the dirt, before M. Schmitt, who had I know not what right of Privy-Counsellor to the King of Prussia. This Franckfort trader thought himself at that moment a Prussian General; he commanded twelve of the town guards, with all the importance and grandeur an affair of such consequence required. My niece had a passport from

the King of France, and, moreover, never had corrected the King of Prussia's verses. Women are usually respected amidst the horrors of war, but the Counsellor Schmitt, and the Resident Freitag, endeavoured to pay their court to Frederic, by hauling one of the fair sex through the mud. They shut us up in a kind of inn, at the door of which the twelve soldiers were posted. Four others were placed in my chamber, four in the garret, where they had conducted my niece, and four in a still more wretched garret, where my Secretary was laid upon straw. My niece, 'tis true, was allowed a small bed, but four soldiers, with fixed bayonets,

nets, served her instead of curtains and chamber-maids.

In vain we urged we had been invited to the court the Emperor had elected at Franckfort; that my Secretary was a Florentine, and a subject of his Imperial Majesty; that I and my niece were subjects of the Most Christian King; and that there was no difference between us and the Margrave of Brandenburg. They informed us, that the Margrave had more power at Franckfort than the Emperor.

Twelve days were we held prisoners of war, for which we paid a hundred and
forty

forty crowns, or seventeen pounds ten shillings a day. The Merchant Schmitt had seized on all my effects, which were given back one half lighter: One need not wish to pay dearer for the *poesy* of the King of Prussia. I lost about as much as it had cost him to send for me and take lessons, and we were quits at parting.

To compleat the adventure, one Venduren, a Bookfeller at the Hague, knave by profession, and bankrupt by habit, was then retired to Franckfort. This was the man to whom I had made a present thirteen years before of Frederic's manuscript of the Anti-Machiavel. One
finds

finds friends where one least expects them. He pretended that his Majesty owed him some twenty ducats, for which I was responsible: he reckoned the interest, and the interest of the interest. The Sieur Friliard, a Burgo-master of Franckfort, in the then year of his reign, said, he, as a Burgo-master, found the account exceedingly right; he likewise found the means to make me disburse thirty ducats, six and twenty of which he took to himself, and gave the remaining four to the honest Bookfeller.

These Ostrogothian and Vandalian affairs being all thus satisfactorily ended,

I em-

I embraced my hosts, thanked them for their kind reception, and departed,

Some time after I went to drink the waters of Plombieres, and with them drank heartily of the waters of Lethe, from a thorough persuasion, that misfortunes of all kinds are good for nothing but to be forgotten. My niece, Madame Denis, who was the consolation of my life, attached to me by her taste for letters, and the tenderest friendship, accompanied me from Plombieres to Lyons. Here I was received by the acclamations of the whole city, and tolerably ill too by the Cardinal de Tencin, Archbishop
of

of Lyons, so well known by the manner in which he had made his fortune; that is, in making the famous Law, or Lais, Author of the system that ruined France, a Catholic. His Council of Embrun finished the fortune his conversion of Law had begun. This system made him rich enough to purchase a Cardinal's hat. He was a Minister of State, and told me in confidence, he durst not give me a public dinner because the King of France was vexed that I had quitted him for the King of Prussia. To this I answered I never dined, and as to Kings or Cardinals, I was the man who perhaps of any in the world was soonest determined how to act.

I had been advised to drink the waters of Aix, in Savoy, and though this place was under the dominion of a King, I proceeded to take the journey. I necessarily passed through Geneva, where the famous Physician Tronchin was just established, and who declared the waters of Aix would kill, but that he would cure me, and I followed his advice. No Catholic is permitted to settle at Geneva, nor yet in the Swiss Protestant Cantons; and it was to me a subject of pleasantry, to acquire domains in the only country upon earth where it was forbidden I should have any.

I bought, by a very singular kind of contract, of which there was no example
in

in that country, a small estate of about sixty acres, which they sold me for about twice as much as it would have cost me at Paris; but pleasure is never too dear. The house was pretty and commodious, and the prospect charming; it astonishes without tiring: on one side is the Lake of Geneva, and the city on the other. The Rhone runs from the former in vast gushes, forming a canal at the bottom of my garden, whence is seen the Arve descending from the Savoy Mountains, and precipitating itself into the Rhone, and farther still another river. A hundred country-seats, a hundred delightful gardens, ornament the borders of the lakes
and

and rivers. The Alps at a vast distance rise and terminate the horizon, and among their prodigious precipices, twenty leagues extent of mountain are beheld covered with eternal snows.

I had another good house, with a more extensive view, at Laufanne; but a seat near Geneva is much more agreeable. In these two habitations I enjoyed what Kings do not give, or rather what they take away, Liberty and Ease. I likewise had what they sometimes do give, and what I had not of them. Here then I put my own precepts in practice.

How happy did I live in this iron age! Every convenience of life and
good

good cheer were found in my two houses. An affable and intelligent society, filled up the moments which study and the care of my health left vacant. My prosperity was sufficient to make my dear fellow-labourers in literature burst with envy. I was not however born rich, and it may be asked by what art I could acquire wealth enough to live like a Farmer-general: to which I answer, and I would have others make me their example, I had seen so many men of letters poor and despised, that I had long determined not to augment the number.

In France, every man must be either the hammer or the anvil, and I was

M

born

born the latter. A small patrimony daily becomes less, because the price of every thing gradually increases, and because government often has both rent and crop.

It is necessary to be attentive to every alteration which Ministry, ever in want and ever inconstant, makes in the finances. There always are occasional opportunities by which an individual may profit without obligation to any one, and nothing is so agreeable as to be oneself the founder of one's fortune. The first efforts are a little painful, the following are pleasant; and he who is an œconomist in his youth, will be surpris'd in old age

at

at his own wealth, which is the time when fortune is most necessary. It was then I enjoyed fortune: it was then that, after having lived with Kings, I became a King myself.

And now, while living in this peaceable opulence, and the most rigid independence, the King of Prussia thought proper to be appeased: in 1755 he sent me an Opera he had made from my Tragedy of Merope, which was, without dispute, the worst thing he ever wrote. From that time he continued to write to me: I always had held a correspondence with his sister, the Margraves of Bareith, whose

whose good-will towards me was unalterable.

Thus while I, in my retreat, enjoyed the most pleasant life imaginable, I had the philosophic satisfaction of seeing, that the Kings of Europe tasted not of my tranquillity; and of thence inferring, that the situation of an individual is often preferable to that of the greatest Kings, as will presently be seen.

In 1756, England made a piratical war upon France for some acres of snow; at the same time that the Empress Queen of Hungary appeared very desirous to recover her dear Silesia, of which she
had

had been pillaged by his Majesty of Prussia. For this purpose she negotiated with the Empress of Russia and the King of Poland, that is, in quality of Elector of Saxony, for nobody negotiates with the Poles. On the other hand, the King of France wished to revenge himself upon Hanover for the mischief which the Elector of Hanover, the King of England, did him at sea. Frederic, who at that time was in alliance with France, and who held our government in the most profound contempt, preferred an alliance with England; he therefore united himself with the House of Hanover, imagining he could keep the Russians out of Prussia with one hand, and

the French out of Germany with the other. He was mistaken in both these imaginings; but there was a third in which he was not mistaken; this was, to invade Saxony under pretext of friendship, and make war upon the Empress Queen of Hungary with the money he should rob the Saxons of. The Marquis of Brandenburg, by this remarkable manœuvre, singly changed the whole system of Europe. The King of France, desirous of retaining him in his alliance, sent the Duke de Nivernois, a man of wit, and who made very pretty verses, into Prussia. The embassy of a Duke, a Peer, and a Poet, seemed likely to flatter the vanity and taste of Frederic; but

he

he laughed at the King of France, and signed his treaty with England, the very day the Ambassador arrived. He played off the Duke and the Peer very happily, and made an epigram upon the Poet.

It happened at that time to be the privilege of poetry to govern kingdoms. There was another Poet at Paris also, a man of rank, very poor, but very amiable; in a word, the Abbé de Bernis, since Cardinal. He began by writing verses against me; he afterwards was my friend, though that was of little service to him; but he likewise became the friend of Madame de Pompadour, and she served him effectually. He had

been sent from Parnassus on an embassy to Venice; and he was then returned to Paris, and in great credit.

The King of Prussia had glided a verse in his poor book of poesy, which that Freitag had re-demanded so earnestly at Franckfort, against the Abbé de Bernis.

“ Avoid the steril abundance of Bernis.”

I do not believe either the book or the verse ever reached the Abbé; but as God is just, God made him an instrument to avenge France of Frederic. The Abbé concluded an offensive and defensive treaty with M. de Staremberg,

the Austrian Ambaffador, in defpight of Rouillé, then Minifter for Foreign Affairs. Madame de Pompadour prefided at that negociation ; and Rouillé was obliged to fign the treaty, in conjunction with the Abbé de Bernis, which was a precedent without example. Rouillé, it muft be owned, was the moft ufelefs Secretary of State the King ever had ; and moreover, the moft ignorant the Long Robe ever knew. He asked one day if Weteravia was in Italy. While there was nothing difficult to tranfact, he was fuffered ; but as foon as great objects came on the tapis, his infufficiency was felt, and the Abbé de Bernis fupplied his place.

Mademoi-

Mademoiselle Poisson, the wife of Le Normand, and Marchioness de Pompadour, was in reality first Minister of State. Certain outrageous terms let slip against her by Frederic, who neither spared women nor poets, had wounded the Marchioness to the heart, and contributed not a little to that revolution in affairs, which, in a moment, re-united the French and Austrians, after more than two hundred years of a hatred supposed to be immortal. The court of France, that pretended to crush Austria in 1741, supported her in 1756; and in conclusion, France, Sweden, Russia, Hungary, the half of Germany, and the Fiscal of the Empire, all declared against the
single

single Marquis of Brandenburg. This Prince, whose grandfather could scarcely maintain twenty thousand men, had an army of a hundred thousand foot, and forty thousand horse, well provided, well selected, and better disciplined; but there were four hundred thousand men in arms to oppose these. It happened in that war, that each party seized upon what was next at hand. Frederic took Saxony; France took the territories of Frederic, from the town of Guelders to Minden upon the Weser, and for a while possessed all the Electorate of Hanover and Hesse, the allies of Frederic; while the Empress of Russia took the whole of Prussia. The King of Prussia,
beaten

beaten at first by the Russians, beat the Austrians, and was afterwards beaten by them in Bohemia the eighteenth of June, 1757.

The loss of one battle ought apparently to have crushed this Monarch ; pressed on all sides by the Russians, French and Austrians, he himself gave all for lost. Marshal de Richelieu had just concluded a treaty near Stade, with the Hanoverians and Hessians, which greatly resembled that of the *Caudian Forks*. Their army was no longer allowed to serve, and the Marshal was ready to enter Saxony with sixty thousand men : the Prince de Soubise prepared to penetrate

trate

trate it on another side with thirty thousand, and was to be seconded by the arms of the circles of the empire, whence they were to march to Berlin. The Austrians had gained a second victory, and were already in possession of Breslau; and one of their Generals had even pushed to Berlin, and laid it under contribution. The treasury of the King of Prussia was nearly exhausted, and in all appearance he would not long have a single village left. They were going to put him under the ban of the empire; his process was begun; he was declared a rebel, and had he been taken, in all probability would have been condemned to lose his head.

In

In this extremity he took a fancy to kill himself. He wrote to his sister, the Margraves of Bareith, that he was going to terminate his life; but he could not conclude the play without rhyming. His passion for poetry was still stronger than his hatred of life; he therefore wrote the Marquis d'Argens a long epistle in verse, wherein he informed him of his resolution, and bade him adieu.

However singular this epistle may be, from the subject, the person by whom it was written, and the person to whom it was addressed, it cannot be transcribed entirely, because of the many repetitions; but there are passages, which

which I will insert, tolerably well turned
for a Northern King.

Yes, D'Argens, yes ; the die, my friend, is cast ;
Sick of the present, weary of the past,
To bear Misfortune's yoke no longer prone,
Henceforth or pains or pleasures I disown ;
Nor thus in mis'ry will I deign to live,
The lengthen'd day, which Nature meant to give ;
With heart well fortify'd, with eye as firm,
Undaunted I approach the happy term,
When Night eternal shall my foes confound,
And Fate no more shall have the power to wound.
Grandeurs adieu !—adieu Chimeras all !
No more your flashes dazzle or appall ;
Though on my morn of life you falsely smil'd,
And, prone to vain desires, my soul beguil'd,
Long since have vanish'd all desires so vain,
And Truth and stern Philosophy remain.

How

How frivolous you were by Zeno taught,
Your errors are no longer worth a thought.
Adieu, ye gentle Pleasures and Delights,
Seductive nymphs, whose flowery yoke unites,
The sweets of smiling Gaiety and Ease,
And all the idle arts by which you please.
But oh ! shall I, Misfortune's bondman, speak
Of Pleasures and Delights, where Sorrows shriek !
Can plaintive nightingale, or turtle-dove,
When vultures tear them, sing or coo of love ?
Long has the star of day but lighted me
To new-born ills, increase of misery ;
His poppies Morpheus has disdain'd to shed,
Near the dank turf where I have lain my head ;
Each morn I cry, and still the tear o'erflows,
Behold another day, and other woes.
When night appears, night cannot give relief,
Each moment adds eternity to grief.
Heroes of Liberty, whom I revere,
Brutus and Cato, ye of soul sincere,

Your

Your deaths, illustrious, dissipate my gloom,
Your funeral flambeaux light me to my tomb;
Your antique virtue Fear and Death controuls,
And points a road unknown to vulgar souls.
Vanish, ye pompous Phantoms of romance,
Ingend'ring superstitious ignorance;
Religious aid I seek not when I'd know
Or what we are, or whence we come or go;
Epicurus has taught how I'm annoy'd,
My body by injurious time destroy'd;
And for the quick'ning fire, the spark, the breath,
Mortal like me, it perishes in death:
Part of a being organiz'd 'tis born,
Grows with the Child, and doth the Man adorn;
Suffers when I'm in pain, pleas'd when I'm pleas'd
Is old when I am, ill when I'm diseas'd;
And when eternal night shall life invest,
Will sink, like me, to everlasting rest.
A vanquish'd fugitive, by friends betray'd,
I suffer torments more than e'er were laid

(As most fictitious lying fables tell)
On poor Prometheus in the depths of Hell;
Therefore, as wretches who in dungeons deep,
Weary of thus existing but to weep,
Deceive their butchers, snap their strongest chains,
And end at once their being and their pains;
So, with one noble effort, will I rend
The web of life, and all my mis'ries end.
This dreary picture will inform thee why
I thus, my friend, have been induc'd to die;
Nor hence conclude I vainly seek to claim,
From the dark senseless grave, the bubble Fame:
But yet remember me when fruitful earth
Gives odoriferous shrubs and myrtles birth;
Each spring, when flowers adorn the youthful year,
Drop o'er my tomb a rose-bud and a tear.

He sent me this epistle written with his
own hand. Several lines are pillaged from

the Abbé de Chaulieu and me. The ideas are often incoherent, and the verses in general unmusical; but there are some good; and it was a great thing for a King to write two hundred bad verses in the state he then was. He was desirous it should be said he preserved all his presence of mind and liberty of thinking, at a moment when they are usually lost to others.

The letter he wrote me testified the same sentiments, but there were less of *eternal Night, Myrtles and Roses, Flambeaux, Chimeras, and shrieking Sorrows*. I combated in prose the resolution he had taken to die, and had not much trouble

in persuading him to live. I advised him to imitate the Duke of Cumberland, and set a negociation on foot with Marshal de Richelieu; in short, I took all the liberties one could take with a despairing Poet, and who was not likely much longer to be a King. He wrote to Marshal de Richelieu, but not receiving any answer he determined to beat us, and sent me word he was going to attack Marshal de Soubise. His letter finished with verses, worthy of his situation, his dignity, his courage, and his wit.

When shipwreck flares us in the face,

Daring let us death embrace,

And live and die a King.

As

As he marched towards the French and Imperialists, he wrote to the Margraves his sister, that he should kill himself, but he was happier than he said or hoped. He waited on the fifth of November, 1757, for the French and Imperial army, in a tolerably advantageous post, at Rossbach, on the frontiers of Saxony; and as he had been continually talking of killing himself, he was willing his brother, Prince Henry, should perform this promise for him, at the head of five Prussian battalions, which were to sustain the first shock of the enemy, while his artillery thundered upon them, and his cavalry attacked their's.

Prince Henry was, in fact, slightly wounded in the neck by a musket-ball, and I believe was the only Prussian hurt on that day. The French and Austrians fled at the first discharge, and the rout was the most unheard of and complete that history can afford. The battle of Rosbach shall long be celebrated. Thirty thousand French, and twenty thousand Imperialists, were seen flying, shamefully and precipitately, before five battalions and some squadrons. The defeats of Agincourt, Cressy, and Poictiers, were not more humiliating. The discipline and military evolutions, which the father had begun, and the son made perfect, were the true cause of this strange victory.

tory. The Prussian exercise had been fifty years in bringing to perfection. They wished to imitate them in France as well as in other countries; but they could not effect that with the French, naturally averse to discipline, in four years, which the Prussians had been fifty about. They had even changed their manœuvres in France at each review, so that the officers and soldiers, not half perfect in each new one, and the evolutions being all different from one another, had in reality learnt nothing, but were actually without any kind of discipline. All was in disorder at the very sight of the Prussians; and Fortune, in one quarter of an hour, snatched Frederic from the

depth of despair to seat him on the heights of happiness and glory.

He was, however, very fearful, that this good fortune was merely temporary; he dreaded to support the whole weight of the French, Russian, and Austrian powers, and was desirous of detaching Louis XV. from Maria-Teresa.

The fatal affair at Rosbach, occasioned all France to murmur at the treaty of the Abbé de Bernis with the court of Vienna. The Cardinal de Tencin, Archbishop of Lyons, had always maintained his rank of Minister of State, and a private correspondence with the King of France,

France, and he was, more than any one, averse to the Austrian alliance. He had given me a reception at Lyons, which he had a right to believe was not very satisfactory; the itch of intriguing, however, which followed him in his retreat, and which, it is said, never leaves men in place, made him desirous of leaguering with me to engage the Margraves of Bareith to treat with him, and put the interests of her brother in his hands. He would reconcile the King of Prussia to the King of France, and hoped to procure a peace. It was not difficult to persuade Madame de Bareith, and the King her brother, to this negociation; and I undertook it with the greater alacrity,

crity, because I foresaw it could not succeed. The Margraves wrote to Frederic, and the letters between her and the Cardinal passed through my hands. I had the secret satisfaction of being the intermediary in that grand affair; and perhaps a still farther pleasure, that of foreseeing the Cardinal was preparing for himself a subject of great disappointment. He wrote to the King of France, and inclosed the letter of the Margraves; but how utter was his astonishment at receiving a laconic answer from the King, by which he learnt, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs would inform him what was his Majesty's pleasure. The Abbé de Bernis dictated the answer which the Cardinal

was

was obliged to send to Frederic; which answer was an entire refusal to negotiate. He was forced to sign a copy of this letter, by which every thing was ended, and died of chagrin in about a fortnight afterwards.

I never could thoroughly understand this kind of death, or how Ministers of State, and old Cardinals with hardened souls, should have a sufficient degree of sensibility to die through some trifling disgust. My design was only to laugh at him; to mortify, and not to kill.

There was a kind of greatness in the Ministry refusing thus to treat of peace
with

with the King of Prussia, after having been beaten by him, and humbled; there was also great fidelity and good-nature in sacrificing themselves for the House of Austria; but these virtues were long ill recompens'd by Fortune. The Hanoverians, Hessians, and Brunswickians, were less observant of public faith, but more successful. They had stipulated with the Marshal de Richelieu not to bear arms against us, but to repass the Elbe, beyond which they had been sent; they, however, broke their bargain of the *Caudian Forks*, as soon as they knew we had been beaten at Rosbach. Desertion, the want of discipline, and disease, destroyed our armies; and the
result

result of all our operations, in the spring of 1758, was, that we had lost twelve millions and a half sterling, and fifty thousand men in Germany, in support of Maria-Teresa, as we had done in 1741 with fighting against her.

The King of Prussia, who had beaten our army at Rosbach, in Thuringia, went next to fight the Austrian army at sixty leagues distance. The French then might still have entered Saxony; the victors were gone, there was nothing to oppose them; but they had thrown away their arms, lost their cannon, ammunition, provisions, and especially their understanding. They were dispersed,
and

and their remains were with difficulty collected. A month afterwards, and on the same day, Frederic gained a still more signal and better fought victory over the Austrians near Breslau. He retook Breslau with fifteen thousand prisoners, and the rest of Silesia was soon subdued. Gustavus Adolphus never performed such acts; we must therefore pardon him his poetry, his pleasantries, his little malice, and even his feminine sins. The defects of the man vanish before the glory of the hero.

I left writing memoirs of myself on the sixth of November, 1759, thinking
them

them as useless as Bayle's letters to his mother; the life of St. Evremont, written by Desmaiseaux, or of the Abbé Mongon, written by himself. But many things, either new or laughable, have again induced me to the ridicule of speaking of myself *. I behold from my windows the city where John Chauvin, the Picard, called Calvin, reigned; and the place where he burnt Servet for the good of his soul. Almost all the Priests of this country think at present like Servet; nay they even go farther. They do not believe that Jesus Christ

* From this passage, and others, it is evident, these memoirs were addressed to some individual, a Lady, by Voltaire.

was God ; and these Messieurs, who formerly gave no quarter to purgatory, are now so far humanised, as to find favour for souls in hell. They pretend their torments shall not be eternal ; that Thefeus shall not always sit upon his stony chair, nor Syfiphus continue everlastingly to roll his rock. Thus they have turned their hell, in which they no longer believe, into purgatory, in which also they do not believe. This is rather a pleasant revolution in the history of the human mind, and might furnish disputes enough for the cutting of throats, making of bonfires, and acting St. Bartholomew's day once more. And yet they do not even call names, and re-
proach

proach one another, so much are manners changed. I must indeed except myself, whom one of their Preachers attacked for having dared to assert that Calvin, the Picard, was of a cruel nature, and had burnt Servet without cause. Only observe the contradictions of this world ; here are people almost avowedly sectaries of Servet, who, yet, abuse me because I found Calvin wrong for burning him at a slow fire of green faggots.

They *would* prove to me in form, that Calvin was a good christian, and petitioned the Council of Geneva to communicate the papers used on the trial of

O

Servet ;

Servet; but the Council was more prudent; the papers were refused, and they forbidden to write against me in Geneva. I look upon this little triumph, as one of the strongest proofs of the progress of reason in our age.

Philosophy enjoyed a still more signal victory over its enemies at Laufanne. Some Gospel Ministers of that country thought proper to compile, I know not what bad book against me, for the honour, as they called it, of christianity; and I, with little difficulty, was empowered to seize and suppress the impression by authority of the Magistrates. This was perhaps the first time Theologians
have

have been obliged to be silent, and respect a Philosopher. Judge then if I ought not passionately to love this country. Yes, thinking beings, I assert it is exceedingly agreeable to live in a republic where you may say to its chiefs,—Come to-morrow and dine with me.

I did not, however, yet think myself perfectly free; and as I held this a subject worthy attention, that I might become so, I purchased some adjoining lands in France. There were two estates, about a league from Geneva, which had formerly enjoyed all the privileges of that city; and I had the good fortune to obtain a Brevet from the King, by which

those privileges were continued to me. At last I so managed my destiny, that I was independent in Switzerland, in the territories of Geneva, and in France. I have heard much of liberty, but do not believe there is an individual in Europe who had wrought his own freedom like me. Let those who will follow my example; or, rather, those who can.

I certainly could not have chosen a better time than this, to enjoy repose far from Paris. They were then as mad and inveterate about their private disputes as in the days of the Fronde, except having actually a civil war. But as they had neither a Monarch of the
4 market-

market-place, like the Duke de Beaufort, nor a Coadjutor, granting benedictions with a dagger, they proceeded only to wordy wars. They began by forging bank bills for the other world, invented as I have already said by Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, an obstinate man, who did evil with all his heart, and from an excess of zeal. He was a serious fool, something in the style of St. Thomas à Becket. The quarrel grew more violent concerning an office in the hospital, the appointment to which the Parliament pretended was in them ; and the Archbishop holding it to be a sacred place, said it depended totally on the church. Paris was all divided into par-

ties, and the trifling factions of Jansenists and Molinists did not spare each other. The King thought proper to treat them as they sometimes serve fools who fight in the street, over whom they throw buckets of water to part them: he very rightly said they were both wrong; but they remained not the less envenomed. He exiled the Archbishop and the Parliament; but a master should not turn off his servants, till he is certain of finding others to supply their places. The Court was obliged to recall the Parliament, because a Chamber, called royal, composed of Counsellors of State, and Masters of Requests, and erected to determine Law-suits, had lost its practice.

The

The Parisians had taken a fancy not to plead before any Court of Justice, except that called the Parliament. All the members therefore were recalled, and imagined they had gained a signal victory over the King. They paternally advised him in their remonstrances no more to banish his Parliament, because, said they, *that is giving a very bad example.* They proceeded to such lengths at last, that the King resolved to abolish one of their Chambers, and diminish the others; and, soon after, these Messieurs all had their dismissal, except those of the great Chamber. Loud murmurs now went abroad; they publicly declaimed against the King, and the fire which came out of their mouth unhappily

caught the brain of a Lackey, named Damiens, who often frequented the great Hall. It is proved, by the process, this fanatic of the long robe never intended to kill the King, but only to inflict a gentle correction. There is nothing so absurd which may not enter the head of man. This poor wretch had been usher to the Jesuit's College, where I have sometimes seen the scholars give slight stabs with their penknives, and the ushers return them. Damiens, therefore, went to Versailles with this resolution, and there, in the midst of his courtiers and guards, wounded the King with a small penknife.

They did not fail during the first horror of the accident, to impute the blow to
the

the arm of the Jesuits, to whom, said they, it belonged according to ancient usage. I have read a letter from one father Griffet, in which he says, *This time it was not us ; it is at present the turn of Messieurs.* It was of course the office of the Grand Prevot of the Court to judge the assassins, because the crime had been committed within the precincts of the palace. The culprit began by accusing seven members of the Court *des Enquêtes*, and they wished nothing better than to leave this accusation upon record, and execute the criminal. Thus the King rendered the parliament odious, and obtained an advantage which will endure as long as the monarchy.

M E M O I R S

O F

V O L T A I R E.

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

PART THE FOURTH AND LAST.

IT was thought, that M. d'Argenson advised the King to grant the parliament permission to judge the foregoing affair, and he was well rewarded; for eight days after he lost his place, and was exiled. The King had the weakness to grant large pensions to the Counsellors who

who conducted the trial of Damiens, as if they had rendered him some signal and difficult service; which conduct inspired them with new confidence. They again imagined themselves important personages, and their chimeras of representing the nation, and being tutors to Kings, were once more awakened.

This scene over, and having nothing else to do, they amused themselves with persecuting the philosophers. Omer Joli de Fleury, Advocate-General of the parliament of Paris, displayed a triumph the most compleat, that ignorance, deceit, and hypocrisy ever obtained. Several men of letters, most
estimable

estimable from their learning and deportment, formed an association to compose an immense dictionary of whatever could enlighten the human mind, and it became an object of commerce with the booksellers. The Chancellor, the Ministry, all encouraged an enterprize so noble; seven volumes had already appeared, and were translated into English, Italian, German, and Dutch. This treasure, opened by the French to all nations, might be considered as what did us at that time the most honour; so much were the excellent articles in the Encyclopedia superior to the bad, which were also tolerably numerous. They had little to complain of in the work, except

too

too many puerile declamations unfortunately adopted by the authors of the collection, who seized whatever came to hand to swell the book; but all which those authors wrote themselves was good.

Omer Joli de Fleury, however, on the twenty-third of February, 1759, accused these poor philosophers of being Atheists, Deists, corrupters of youth, rebels to the King, &c. &c. &c. and to prove his accusation, cited St. Paul, and the trials of Theophilus and Abraham Chaumaix*.

* Abraham Chaumaix, formerly ***, since Jansenist and Convulsionary, was then the oracle of the parliament of Paris. Omer Joli de Fleury cited him as a Father of the Church; he has since been a school-master at Moscow.

He

He wanted nothing but to have read the book against which he exclaimed ; for if he had read it, he was a strange imbecile being. He demanded justice of the Court against the article *soul*, which, according to him, was pure materialism.

Pray remark that the article *soul*, one of the worst in the work, was written by a poor Doctor of the Sorbonne, who killed himself with declaiming, right or wrong, against materialism.

The whole discourse of this Omer Joli de Fleury was a string of similar blunders. He informed against a book he had either not read, or not understood ;

stood; and the entire parliament, at the requisition of Omer, condemned the work, not only without examining, but even without reading a single page. This manner of doing justice, is very much beneath the custom of Bridoye, for there they may chance to be right.

The editors had procured the King's privilege, and the parliament certainly had no right to revoke a privilege granted by his Majesty. It appertains not to them either to judge of an *Arrêt du Conseil*, or of any thing confirmed in Chancery: they however assumed the power to condemn what the Chancellor had approved, and appointed Lawyers

to

to decide upon the subjects of geometry and metaphysics contained in the Encyclopedia. A Chancellor of the least fortitude would have annulled the Arret of parliament as incompetent: the Chancellor L.'Amoignon satisfied himself with revoking the privilege, that he might not undergo the shame of seeing what he had stamped with the seal of supreme authority judged and condemned.

One would imagine this adventure had happened in the days of Father Garasse, and that these were arrets against taking emetics; but on the contrary, it was in the most enlightened age France had ever seen. So true it is,
that

that one fool is enough to dishonour a nation.

No one will scruple to confess, that under such circumstances, Paris was no resting-place for a Philosopher, and that Aristotle was very prudent in retiring to Chalcis when Fanaticism reigned at Athens. Besides, the condition of a man of letters, at Paris, is but one step above a Mountebank.

The place of Gentleman in ordinary to his Majesty, which the King had given me, was no great thing. Men are very silly; for my part, I think it much better to build a fine mansion, as I

P

did,

did, have a theatre, and keep a good table, than to be hunted at Paris like Helvetius, by people holding the court of parliament, or by other people holding the stables of the Sorbonne. As I was certain I could neither make men more reasonable, the parliament less pedantic, nor the Theologians less ridiculous, I continued to be happy far from their follies.

And yet, while I contemplate the storm, I am almost ashamed of my own tranquillity. I behold Germany dyed in blood; France utterly ruined; our fleets and armies beaten; our ministers dismissed, one after another, without any
4 prospect

prospect of better success ; and the King of Portugal assassinated, not by a Lackey, but the Nobility of the kingdom. Neither can the Jesuits this time say, *it was not us* : they have carefully preserved their rights ; it has been sufficiently proved these good Fathers had given the sanctified knife to the Parricides. They give for reason their sovereignty of Paraguay, and say they have treated with the King of Portugal as between crown and crown.

I shall now relate a trifling, but as singular an adventure as ever happened since Kings and Poets first were seen on earth. Frederic, having passed some

P 2

time

time guarding the frontiers of Silesia in an impenetrable camp, began to be tired of inactivity; and, therefore, to pass time away, composed an Ode, and signed it Frederic; this he put at the head of an enormous bundle of verse and prose, which he sent to me. I opened the package, and found I had not been the first who had performed that operation; it was evident the seals had been broken, and I was terrified at reading the following verses:

Oh trifling nation, light and vain!

Are these the warriors whom Turenne

And Luxembourg with laurels bound,

Whom Fame's immortal honours crown'd;

Who,

Who, as we're told in ancient story,
Danger and death despis'd for glory?
Lo the vile rout! behold each slave
Fearful in fight, in pillage brave!
Behold their feeble monarch move,
The tool of Pompadour and Love!
To Love opprobrious, as to Fame,
Unworthy he the Monarch's name:
At random see he flings the reins,
Detesting Empire's anxious pains;
His land and people in distress,
He revels on in lewd excess;
Himself a slave, when pride inflates,
Would dictate laws to Kings and States.

I trembled as I read the poem, some
lines of which are excellent, or may pass
for such. I had unfortunately acquired,
and deserved, the reputation of having

been the continual corrector of the King of Prussia's poetry. The packet had been opened, the verses read, might perhaps be published, the King of France would attribute them to me, and I should become not only guilty of high treason against the King, but, which was still worse, against Madame de Pompadour.

In this perplexity, I desired the French Resident at Geneva to come to my house, and shewed him the packet. He agreed it had been opened before it arrived, and thought there was no other way of acting in a case where the safety of my head was concerned, but sending it as it was to the Duke de Choiseul, Minister of State.

State. In any situation but this I should not have followed his advice ; but it was necessary to prevent my own ruin, and I acquainted the court with the true character of its enemy. I knew the Duke de Choiseul would not betray me, but content himself with persuading his Majesty that Frederic was an enemy, whom, if they could, they ought to crush.

The Duke did not stop here ; he was a man of wit, wrote verses, and had friends who wrote also : He paid the King of Prussia in his own coin, and sent me a satire against Frederic, as biting and unmerciful as his own. The follow-

ing lines are extracts from this Poem * :

No longer he the man, by whom

The arts, from black oblivion's tomb,

Were call'd, and o'er Germaina spread :

A husband, brother, son of guilt,

His Sire, in justice, would have spilt

The blood which so much blood has shed,

Yet he, audacious, durst aspire

To touch Apollo's sacred lyre ;

The rhyming King of Poet-tasters :

His Mars and Phœbus are the same,

Alike in war and verse his fame,

Zoilus and Mævius are his masters.

* I have been assured by M. the P. F. of S. this Ode was written by S. Palinot de Montenois.

Behold,

Behold, in spite of all his guards,

Where Nero meets the due rewards

Of all his hideous provocations ;

The Tyrant see of Syracuse

Now prostitute a barren muse,

Despis'd while he insults the nations.

And wherefore, savage Censor, say,

Would'st thou impede their harmless play,

When Love, with Nature, smiling comes ?

Shalt thou pretend to judge their rites,

Who ne'er could'st taste but those delights

Imparted by thy noisy drums ?

The Duke de Choiseul assured me
when he sent this answer, that he would
print the satire if the King of Prussia pub-
lished his ; and added, they would beat
him as heartily with the pen, as they
hoped

hoped to do with the sword. Had I been inclined so to amuse myself, it depended only on me to set the King of France and the King of Prussia to war in rhyme, which would have been a farce of novelty upon earth. But I enjoyed another pleasure; that of being more prudent than Frederic. I wrote him word his ode was beautiful, but that he ought not to publish it; he had glory enough without that, and should not shut every door of reconciliation with the King of France, aggravate him beyond bearing, and force him to some desperate effort to obtain a just revenge. I added, my niece had burnt his ode, in mortal fear of its being imputed to me. He believed
me,

me, and returned me thanks ; but not without a few reproaches, for having burnt the best verses he had ever written. The Duke de Choiseul kept his word, and was discreet.

To make the pleasantry compleat, I thought it possible to lay the foundation of the peace of Europe on these poetical pieces, which might have continued the war to the destruction of Frederic. My correspondence with the Duke de Choiseul gave birth to that idea ; and it appeared so ridiculous, so worthy the transactions of the times, that I indulged it, and had myself the satisfaction of proving on what weak and invisible pivots the destinies

destinies of nations turn. The Duke wrote me several ostensible letters, conceived in such terms, as the King of Prussia might venture to make overtures of peace without danger of Austria taking umbrage at France; and Frederic returned answers in a similar way, with little risk of displeasing the English court. This ticklish treaty is still in agitation, and resembles the sports of cats, which give a pat with one paw and a scratch with the other. The King of Prussia, driven out of Dresden, and beaten by the Russians, is in want of peace; and France, beaten at sea by the English, and on shore by the Hanoverians, with an ill-timed loss of men and money,

money, is obliged to finish this ruinous war.

And this, beautiful Emily, is the point at which, for the present, we stop.

December 27, 1759.

I continue to write, and on singular events. The King of Prussia ended a letter to me on the 17th of November thus: *I shall write more fully from Dresden, where I shall be in three days; and the third day he was beaten by Marshal Daun, with the loss of ten thousand men. It seems to me, every thing I behold is the fable of the girl and her milk.* Our great sea-politician, Berrier, formerly

formerly Lieutenant de Police at Paris, and who, from that post, became Secretary of State and Minister of the Marine, without ever having seen a vessel larger than the ferry-boat of St. Cloude, or the barge of Auxerre; this Berrier, I say, took a fancy to fit out a fine fleet, and make a descent on England; but scarcely had the fleet peeped out of Brest, before it was beaten by the English, wrecked upon the rocks, destroyed by the winds, or swallowed up by the seas.

We have seen one Silhouette, made Comptroller-General of the Finances, of whom no man knew any thing except that he had translated some of Pope's poetry

poetry into prose. He was said to be an eagle, but in less than a month the eagle was metamorphosed to an owl. He found the secret of annihilating public credit to that degree, that the State all at once wanted money to pay the troops. The King was obliged to send his plate to the Mint, and a great part of the kingdom followed his example.

January 1st, 1760.

Frederic must be perfidious; he has sent my confidential letters to London, and has endeavoured to sow dissension betwixt us and our allies. All kind of perfidies, permitted to a Grand King of Prussia, has he acted; even to the mak-
ing

ing of verses, for those he must ever make. I sent them to Versailles, doubting they would be accepted. He will cede nothing; and proposes, in order to indemnify the Elector of Saxony, that they shall give him Erford, which belongs to the Elector of Mentz. He always must rob somebody; it is his way. We shall see the result of all this, and of the campaign they are going to make.

As this great and horrid tragedy has ever had a mixture of the comic, so they have lately printed at Paris, *Des Poesies ouf da King mine Master*, as Freitag says; in which there is an epistle to Marshal Keith, where he ridicules christianity,

and mocks at the immortality of the soul. The devotees are displeased; the Calvinist clergy murmur. These pedants looked upon him as a support to the good cause. When he threw the Magistrates of Leipzig into dungeons, and sold their beds to get their money, he had the admiration of such Priests; but when he amuses himself by translating passages from Seneca, Lucretius, and Cicero, they look upon him as a monster.

Priests would canonize Cartouche or Jonathan Wild, were they devotees.

T H E E N D.

and monks at the immensity of his

power. The devoted are displaced, the

Catholic clergy punished. These passions

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cause. When he threw the *Discipline*

of the *Discipline* into dungeons, and his

beds to get their money, he had the ad-

miral of such *Princes*; but when he

reminds himself the travelling palaces

from *Spain*, *France*, and *Italy*.

They look upon him as a monster.

For *Voltaire*, who was not a monster,

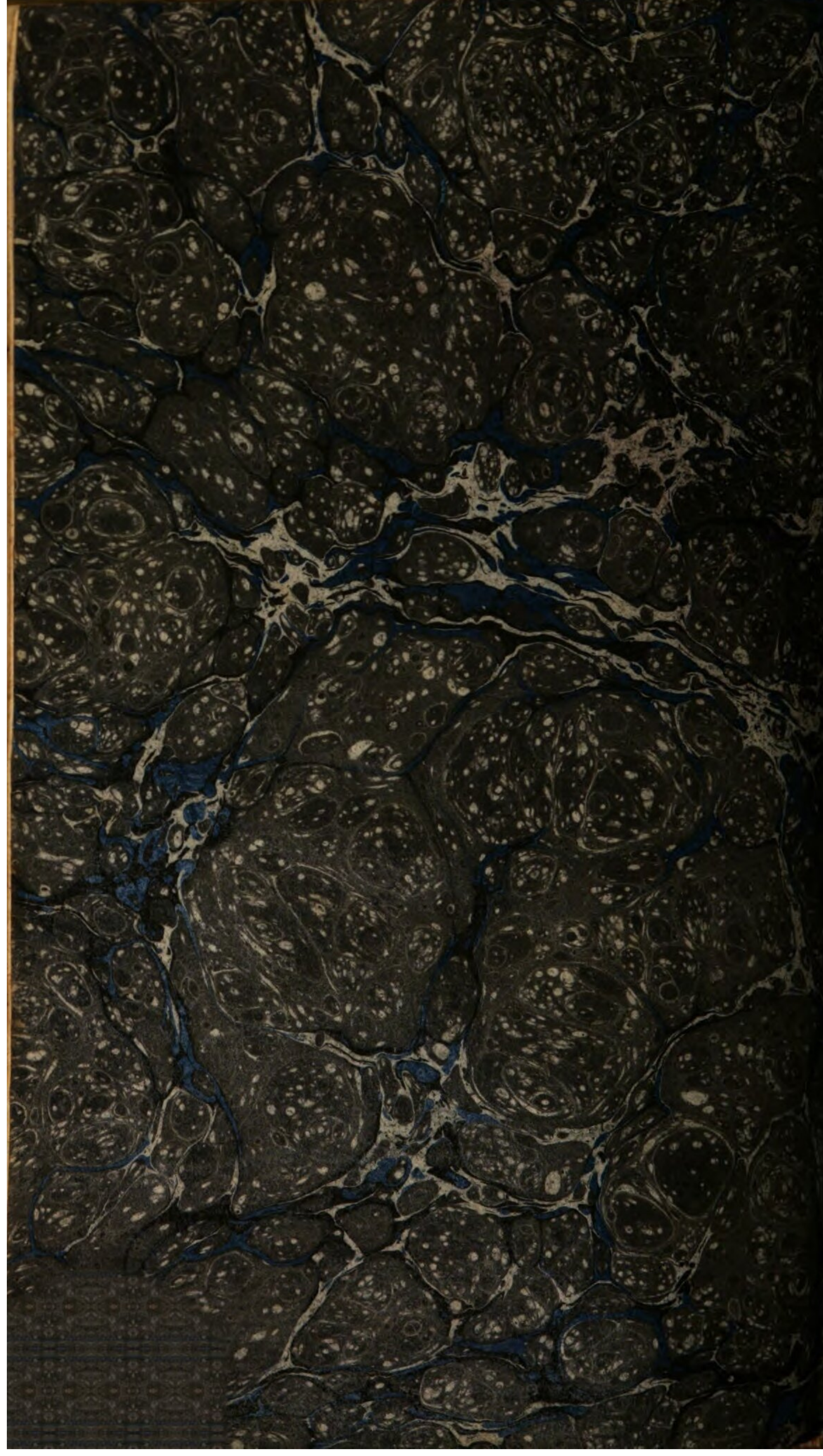
he would canonize *Catherine* or

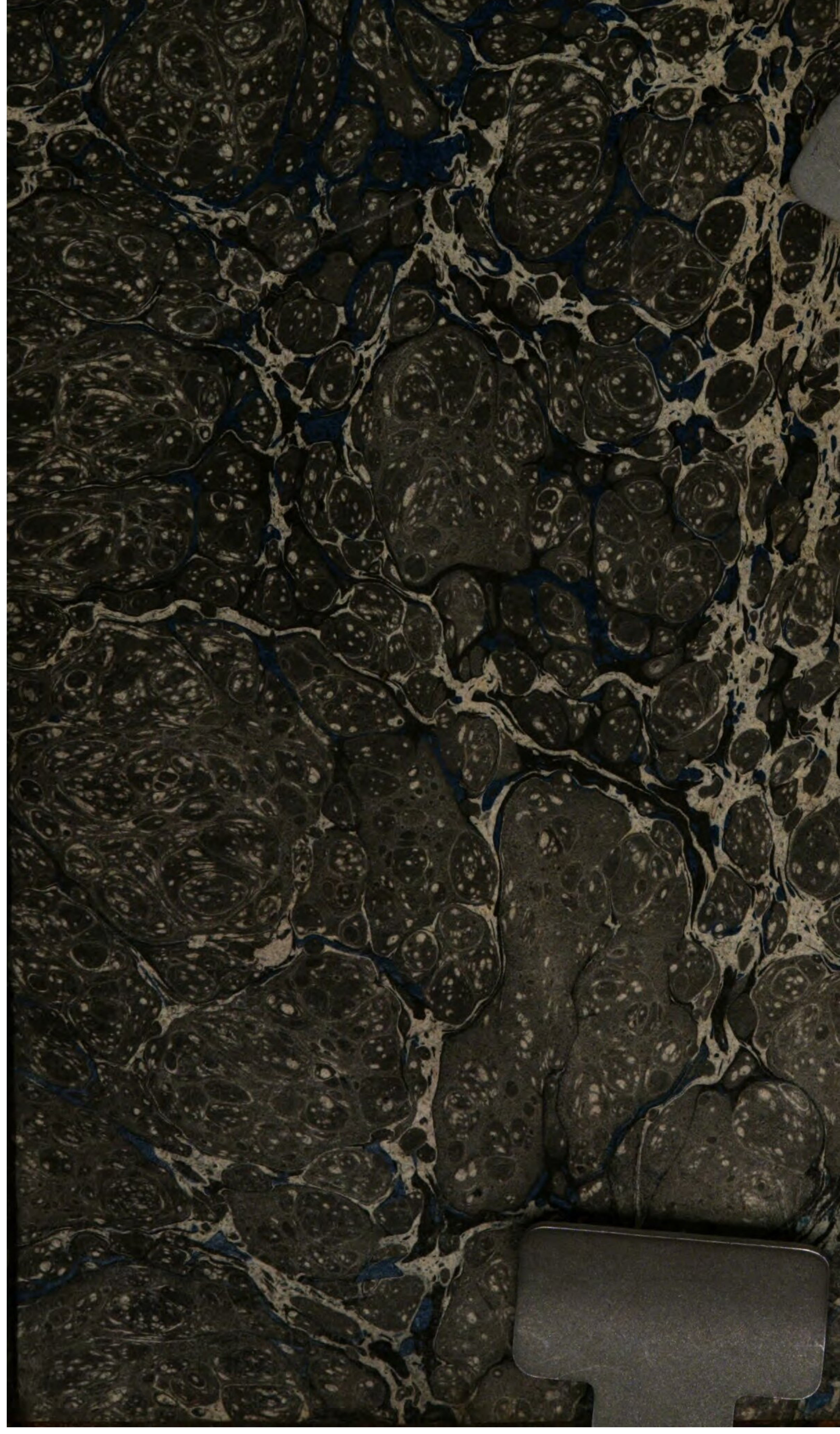
Isabelle or *Wally*, were they devoted.

For *Voltaire*, who was not a monster,

he would canonize *Catherine* or

Isabelle or *Wally*, were they devoted.





Condorcet, Jean Antoine Nicolas de Caritat de, 1743-1794

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